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Hong Kong
considers 'floating
hotels'

HONG KONG (AP) —
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U.S. citizen dies in Palestinian custody

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — A U.S. citizen of Palestinian origin died in hospital after being taken ill from a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) interrogation centre in self-ruled Jericho, Palestinian security officials said on Friday. They said Wael Azzam Abdul Rahim, who was being held for questioning on a criminal offence, suffered a heart attack on Thursday night and was taken to hospital where he died. A spokesperson for the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem confirmed that Abdul Rahim, an American citizen in his early 50s, had died but gave no information on the circumstances. "We are looking at the circumstances of his death," the spokesperson said. Abdul Rahim's relatives told reporters they found marks of torture on his body when they brought it from a Jericho hospital for burial at his native village of "Ain Yabrud, near the West Bank town of Ramallah. Relatives assaulted cameramen who tried to take pictures of the funeral, journalists said.

Volume 19 Number 6033

AMMAN SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1995, JUMADA ULA 6, 1416

Price: Jordan 150 Fils



An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية الراي

Clinton: Israel fully committed to self-rule accord

U.S. pledges to do 'whatever it takes' to complete peace process after Israel, PLO sign agreement; prisoner release delayed, but Arafat unfazed; Peres says Palestinian state unrealistic, confederation with Jordan is best for all

Combined agency dispatches

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Bill Clinton said Friday he believed Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and his government will fulfill "both the letter and spirit" of the Palestinian autonomy accord signed here.

"I believe (Israel's) prime minister and its government are completely committed to this," Mr. Clinton told reporters ahead of a meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

His comments came as Israel delayed the release of more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners that was to coincide with Thursday's signing ceremony.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said he was untroubled by the delay and expected the release in a few days.

"They (Israelis and Palestinians) know exactly what they are getting into. They have made very, very deep commitments to one another," Mr. Clinton said.

"And just as I believe that Chairman Arafat is going to do his best to try to manage the terror, I believe that the prime minister will do everything he can to fulfill both the letter and the spirit of the agreement."

Earlier Friday, Mr. Clinton told Israel TV he was "prepared to do whatever it takes" to close the circle of peace in the Middle East.

"I think that in order for peace to be achieved, I will

have to be deeply, personally involved," Mr. Clinton said in an interview.

Since Middle East peace talks began in 1991, Israel has concluded a peace treaty with Jordan and reached several interim agreements with the Palestinians. However, Israel's negotiations with Syria and Lebanon remain deadlocked.

"I am prepared to do whatever it takes to try and finish the entire peace process which includes an agreement with Syria and Lebanon as well as the final status of the agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians," Mr. Clinton told Israel TV.

Mr. Clinton also pledged to support Israel in its campaign to stop suicide attacks by militants who have killed dozens of Israelis over the past two years.

"I hate terrorism. I will do everything I can to support Israel's attempt to stamp it out," Mr. Clinton said.

"But I believe that only the long run, the course we are pursuing, is more likely to bring an end to terrorism than trying to go back the other way and having no agreement. Then the enemies of peace will have a field day," Mr. Clinton added.

Mr. Clinton was evasive when asked whether the United States would move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. As a presidential candidate in 1992, Mr. Clinton had spoken of recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital, but as president did not follow up.

"I felt that historically, Jerusalem was the capital of Israel and would someday have the embassies, including ours," he said in Friday's interview.

However, he added that as a mediator in the negotiations, the United States "should not do anything to make a public display that would disrupt the peace process."

"That is the most important thing now, the integrity of the peace process," Mr. Clinton said.

Under the glittering chandeliers of the East Room, Mr. Clinton presided Thursday over two hours of speeches and pageantry before an audience of 200 diplomats, foreign ministers, cabinet secretaries and members of Congress.

Mr. Arafat, who fought in his first war against Israel as a teenager in 1948, and Mr. Rabin, an Israeli brigade commander in that war, signed the 400-page agreement at 1:16 p.m. EDT (1716 GMT).

Standing alongside a beaming President Clinton — who stands to get a political boost from U.S. mediation of the accord — the two then duplicated the famous ice-breaking handshake they exchanged two years ago in signing a declaration of peace principles at the White House.

Israel meanwhile delayed the start of the release of Palestinian prisoners that was to have coincided with the signing of the autonomy accord, with officials saying a few days were needed to

study the cases of women prisoners who had taken part in attacks on Israelis.

Mr. Arafat was meanwhile meeting U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on economic cooperation with the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the autonomy pact.

A tripartite commission on economic development has been established including the United States, Israel and Jordan, but Mr. Arafat expressed hope of more countries helping in the economic effort.

Mr. Peres meanwhile underlined the need to work on economic matters to make the autonomy accord a success.

"We all have to mobilise," Mr. Peres said, citing in particular a plan to establish industrial zones between Israel and the territories "in-

stead of putting mines" there.

Mr. Christopher for his part said he hoped Thursday's accord would provide "a very strong incentive" for donor nations to follow through on pledges of economic aid.

So far \$2.4 billion has been promised to the Palestinians, but only \$650 million has been released.

Mr. Peres said the autonomy agreement to transfer most of the occupied West Bank to Palestinian control will likely lead to a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, not a Palestinian state as envisaged by Mr. Arafat.

Mr. Peres told CBS "This Morning" that Mr. Arafat was entitled to his dream of a Palestinian state, but said "we didn't agree about

(Continued on page 2)

U.S. launches \$50m project

THE UNITED STATES on Friday launched a \$50 million project to improve water and other services for Palestinians in the West Bank.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) launched a four-year, \$50 million project designed to significantly improve the quality and quantity of basic municipal services to Palestinian residents of the West Bank, the U.S. Information Service said in a statement.

The municipal services

project consists of critical infrastructure activities. The first set of activities, focusing on water, totals \$8 million and will be implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

It will include a \$3 million activity to construct and rehabilitate water systems in more than a dozen West Bank villages, providing 60,000 people with running water in their homes for the first time.

The project also included a \$3 million water system for Hebron.

(Continued on page 2)

King: No losers and all winners in peace

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein has expressed hope that the deadline in negotiations between Syria and Israel and Lebanon and Israel would be broken soon so that the "circle" of peace in the Middle East could be completed.

The King, delivering a short address at a reception hosted by U.S. President Bill Clinton after Thursday's signing of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy agreement, also paid tribute to the Palestinian leadership for its "courageous" decision to make peace with Israel.

The King said there would be no losers in making peace, and both sides were the winners, but the key question for the leaders was to accept that conflicts could not be resolved without engaging the opposite party in negotiations.

"How can you make peace with somebody you do not know?" said the King. "How can you make peace with someone you cannot talk to? How can you explore the possibilities the venues how can you build trust and mutual confidence in each other?"

Without specifically naming Syria and Lebanon, the King said: "Let us hope and pray that others will come, and we are sure that they will, and when they do they will exhibit even greater courage because their actions will complete the circle and get us all to enjoy what we have been denied for so long."

"For them to join us will be more than welcome. We pray and hope that it will not be long before seeing them with us, and with God's will and guidance, see their contribution for the establishment of the comprehensive peace that we seek."

(Continued on page 2)

4 die in Yemen clash between troops, gang

ADEN (R) — Four men died in clashes between Yemeni security forces and a gang which had attacked a wedding party in a southern region on Yemen, travellers said on Friday. There was no immediate official confirmation of the clash, said to have started on Thursday and continued sporadically until Friday afternoon in the Dalcia region, 100 kilometres north of Aden. Travellers said two men from government security forces and two from an armed group described as "radical Islamic elements" were killed. They said fighting erupted after the forces surrounded the group's base after residents complained they had attacked a wedding last week and a grenade, which did not explode. There were no reports of injuries. Residents said the gang was headed by an Algerian sheikh. In a similar attack this month, about eight people were injured when a grenade exploded at a wedding in Aden, South Yemen's capital before it merged with North Yemen in 1990.



The King said he had accepted long ago that without engaging the opposite party in dialogue there could be no solution to the conflict. He implicitly referred to his contacts with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin before Jordan and Israel made peace and recalled that President Clinton had asked the two of them as to how many years they had known each other.

"I'd like to say that more than I would care to remember," said the King. "As people in positions of responsibility, peace has always been our dream and our hope, and we strove to achieve it and turn it into a reality. Our relations passed through some very difficult moments, passed through strife, and tragedies. Permit me to say from my limited experience, I have always sought to place myself in my opposite number's position time and again because when peace arrives when such a goal is achieved it is not a question of one side winning and other losing. The reality is that everybody wins and for that to happen there has to be understanding and compromise and there has to be dedication and courage and

(Continued on page 2)

Libya: Palestinians leaving en masse

TRIPOLI (Agencies) — Libya on Friday announced the departure en masse of Palestinians expelled on the orders of the country's leader Muammar Qadhafi.

The official agency JANA said: "The Palestinian masses have started today to implement their decision concerning the return to Palestine."

"A certain number of Palestinian families have begun their return journey," the agency added, without giving details on the numbers involved.

Col. Qadhafi said in a Sept. 1 speech that it was time for Palestinians in Arab states to "go home," in an attempt to swamp the Gaza Strip and West Bank and show the "failure" of Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreements to establish self-rule there.

More than 5,000 of Libya's 30,000 Palestinians have been expelled across the borders to Egypt since then.

Three busloads of deported Palestinians crossed from Libya into Egypt on Thursday and the Libyan authorities set up more tents to shelter thousands expected over the coming days.

The latest batch crossed on the same day that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed in Washington an agreement on extending self-rule to parts of the West Bank still under Israeli occupation.

"It is a black day in the history of the Arab Nation," JANA said, reporting Thursday's ceremony in Washington.

The Palestinian deportees said 11 of them were going to the Gaza Strip through the Egyptian border at Rafah while the rest of the 150 on the buses headed to Jordan through the Egyptian Red Sea port of Nuweibeh terminals for a ferry to Aqaba.

All of them have their papers in order and they did not expect to face the same problems as some earlier deportees, who travelled across Egypt and back in search of a refuge.

Israeli is stabbed

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — A Palestinian youth stabbed an armed Israeli in the back in the Old City of Jerusalem on Friday, the police said.

The Israeli, despite a knife lodged in his back, managed to open fire with a pistol but his assailant escaped. The man, aged 37, was taken to hospital where doctors removed the knife.

In the occupied West Bank, Palestinian militants hurled two Molotov cocktails at a Jewish settlers' home in the flashpoint town of Hebron, without causing injuries or damage.

Israeli troops closed down the central marketplace after the attack on the nearby Avraham Axine residence. The assailants escaped.

In confrontations Friday, dozens of teenagers threw stones at soldiers. Troops sporadically chased them, but did not fire rubber bullets or teargas, as is customary.

At one point, two fire-bombs were thrown at the Avraham Avinn settler compound in downtown Hebron. In response, Israeli soldiers rounded up about 100 Palestinians and ordered them to stand with their backs to a wall, Palestinian reporters said.

Soldiers confiscated the identity cards of the detainees, and then called them forward individually. Young men were taken to a different area and the older ones let go, the reporters said.

Hardline groups, Hamas and Islamic Jihad have called for clashes with troops and Jewish settlers on Friday in protest at the West Bank autonomy accord signed the previous day in Washington.

Hundreds of settlers protested in Hebron on Thursday, accusing Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of selling out greater Israel.

"Settlers vowed to fight Israel's plans to turn over

(Continued on page 7)

Joint declaration pledges help to implement accord

WASHINGTON (USIA) — President Bill Clinton and the leaders of Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian Authority pledged "to do everything possible to ensure successful and complete implementation" of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement signed Sept. 28 in Washington.

In a joint declaration of the Washington Summit, issued by the White House, President Clinton, King Hussein, President Hosni Mubarak, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Chairman Yasser Arafat "agreed to have their representatives meet to discuss ways to support this process and build upon it to achieve a comprehensive peace."

The leaders affirmed the historic importance of the Israel-Palestinian interim agreement and praised the dedication and skill of the negotiating teams led by Foreign Minister Peres and Chairman Arafat. They expressed their support for the Palestinian Authority as it assumed self-government responsibilities under the agreement and their hope that Palestinian elections would be held as soon as possible. The leaders pledged to do everything possible to ensure successful and complete implementation of the agreement. They agreed to have their representatives meet to discuss ways to support this process and build upon it to achieve a comprehensive peace.

The leaders noted their appreciation for the international efforts undertaken since Sept. 13, 1993 to support the Israel-Palestinian Declaration of Principles and its implementing agreements. They recognised the importance of economic cooperation and development in supporting a lasting peace in the region and committed themselves to enhance mutual coordination for the common benefit of their peoples and all the region. In this regard, they pledged their full support for the upcoming Amman Economic Summit and for establishment of a Middle East Development Bank.

They reiterated the call for an end to the Arab boycott as soon as possible.

The five leaders expressed their condemnation in the strongest possible terms of all

acts of violence and terror.

They reaffirmed their determination to confront all enemies of peace and reiterated the need for all possible measures to be taken — founded upon the rule of law — to ensure security for the citizens of Israel and for the Palestinian people.

The leaders reviewed progress in the Syria-Israel negotiations and reaffirmed their conviction that early conclusion of a peace treaty between these two countries and between Israel and Lebanon would be key steps toward their common goal of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

(Continued on page 12)

Holbrooke presses Bosnians for truce

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — U.S. troubleshooter Richard Holbrooke returned to Sarajevo Friday for another round of shuttle diplomacy aimed at getting a ceasefire in Bosnia as clashes between government forces and the Bosnian Serbs continued.

Arriving at the presidency for talks with Bosnian officials the U.S. assistant secretary of state said that a ceasefire was still a long way off and divisions over territory remained "very wide."

He said that the Serbs were a long way from accepting the conditions put by the Bosnians for a ceasefire adding, "we haven't made any progress on a ceasefire yet."

Mr. Holbrooke predicted his new round of diplomatic contacts between Bosnians, Croats and Serbs would be as tough as the previous ones. Mr. Holbrooke began the day with a 15 minute one-to-one meeting with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic.

They were later joined by Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic and Hasan Muratovic, who handles relations with the United Nations.

Syria says U.S. effort could bring peace deal with Israel

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syrian media said on Friday the United States' efforts to push forward stalled Syrian-Israeli talks could lead to peace between the two countries.

The remarks followed the signing in Washington of a new Israel-Palestinian peace accord which Damascus has criticised.

The official Syrian daily Al Baath renewed condemnation of the accord, saying it fell short of achieving peace in the Middle East.

Full peace in the region could only be reached when Israel withdrew from the occupied Golan Heights, it said.

"The efforts of the American envoys will reach their goals if they concentrate on an Israeli commitment to complete requirements of the peace process," Al Baath said.

The issue of the Golan Heights, seized by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war, is the main obstacle to peace between Syria and Israel. Damascus wants a full Israeli withdrawal while the Jewish

state demands a commitment to full diplomatic relations first.

Damascus is also upset that the Palestinians and Jordan have made peace with Israel. It says it wanted a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace.

Syrian Television on Thursday night showed shots of the signing of the latest PLO-Israeli deal as the third item in the news with a brief comment. The news also highlighted shots of the Palestinian opposition in the West Bank to the deal.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said on Wednesday he was optimistic the Syrian-Israeli talks could move forward and he would start a regional tour in the next two weeks.

In Washington on Friday, President Bill Clinton was to meet the leaders of Egypt and Jordan on ways to bring Syria and Lebanon into the fold.

"A new Middle East is in the making," PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said on Thursday. "And this new Middle East won't be complete until we succeed on the Syrian

track and the Lebanese track."

After Thursday's signing, Mr. Arafat, Mr. Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, along with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein issued a statement calling on Syria and Lebanon to join in a comprehensive Middle East peace.

"The leaders reviewed progress in the Syria-Israel negotiations and reaffirmed their conviction that early conclusion of a peace treaty between these two countries and between Israel and Lebanon would be key steps toward their common goal of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region," it said.

The statement also said that Mr. Clinton, Mr. Rabin, Mr. Arafat, King Hussein and Mr. Mubarak "expressed their condemnation in the strongest possible terms of all acts of violence and terror," and vowed to confront all enemies of peace.

It added that the leaders

(Continued on page 12)

Clinton gets first-hand brush with last-minute snag in self-rule deal

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Last minute snags are not rare in negotiating high-level diplomatic agreements, but President Bill Clinton reminded his Middle Eastern guests Thursday that there is a certain amount of pressure involved when the obstacle pops up with television cameras already focused on the signing table.

The snag, a senior administration official was quick to point out, involved a relatively minor language problem and did not threaten signing of the interim accord on Palestinian self-rule on the West Bank. But it did cause unusual interest in the detailed maps of the region each of the leaders initialed, and it did delay the East Room signing ceremony by about 15 minutes.

Mr. Clinton learned of the hang-up during a plenary session with the major players in the signing — Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, King Hussein, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. Aides to Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat had been meeting in another room to hammer out final language on the timing of withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Force from the Hebron area.

"While the five-way discussion was going on," the official said, "Dennis Ross came in and informed the group that a snag had been hit and said that Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat needed to caucus. They and Clinton adjourned to the president's private dining room where the problem was laid out and the president stressed that it was very important, with the world waiting out there, to get this problem resolved."

The president left by two alone, and within eight minutes Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat settled the matter, making what the official termed "pen and ink changes" to the typed agreement. That led to an examination of the 26 detailed maps of the region spread out on the conference table of the Cabinet Room adjacent to the Oval Office.

"Clinton went through them," the official noted, "and remarked on the degree of detail involved; it brought home to him how much work these guys had done."

While the official refused to give specifics on what caused the snag, he said it involved loosely-drafted language deliberately left unclear in Tabia in the rush to finish the agreement last week.

"There was not really disagreement on the concept" of withdrawal, the official said. "The wording was what they had to work their way through. My understanding is the wording was left unclear and they knew they would have to work through it."

Perhaps fittingly, Mr. Clinton had been enthralled to hear details of the negotiations in Tabia which led up to the accord, and of the very numerous discussions involved there. Mr. Rabin, the official said, "gave the president a fairly dramatic description of last minute snags and how they had been solved. At one point, the prime minister said he told Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, 'this thing done, the last thing I need to break the holiday (Jewish New Year) when I have to bring this to the Knesset.' It gave the president a sense of the atmosphere."

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Rabin

also met one-on-one to evaluate what steps could be taken to move the Syrian negotiating track forward and "how to deal with some of the procedural issues that have prevented progress over the past couple of months."

In his 30-minute session with Mr. Arafat, Mr. Clinton emphasized to the Palestinian leader the need to end terrorism, both in terms of what the interim agreement provides and in terms of the perception with which the international community views a Palestinian entity. The president noted that extension of the U.S. legislation allowing financial aid to the Palestinians is pending in Congress, which Mr. Arafat satisfies the concerns of the legislature on terrorism could have an impact on the measure.

Mr. Arafat assured Mr. Clinton of his seriousness of purpose, the official said, and pointed out that violence in the region has been carried out against Palestinians favouring the peace process as well as against Israelis. He told Mr. Clinton, the official added, that he was moving to undercut terrorism by educating Palestinians on the stakes involved in successful implementation of agreements with Tel Aviv, and that he has also increased security measures in areas already under control of the Palestinian Authority.

The official said Mr. Arafat's very presence with Mr. Clinton in the Oval Office "represents an evolution" in U.S. relations with Palestinians; although Mr. Arafat had been in the office last year with Mr. Clinton and Mr. Rabin, it marked the first time, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Arafat met bilaterally. "It

was a free-flowing discussion," the official said.

Most of the substantive discussion during the large meeting — the first time the leaders of the United States, Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian Authority had been together in the same room — covered the situation in Bosnia, with Clinton's Muslim visitors outlining their view of the conflict between the mostly Muslim Bosnian government and Serb separatists.

"There was an extensive exchange of views," the official noted, "in terms of Muslim relations with the Europeans, with the United States, and their place in the world. It was quite meaty, with a lot of participation from all of the parties." Mr. Clinton gave his guests a "detailed rundown" of the current negotiations aimed at a ceasefire and a settlement.

The five agreed on the importance of Mideast regional economic development and the contribution to that goal that could be made by the Amman summit meeting next month. They agreed on the need to create a Mideast development bank and, discussed European objections to current plans for its structure and capitalisation.

The luncheon which concluded the first day's working session, the official said, was "very animated and quite collegial." He said the five had developed a degree of comfort with one another which allowed good-natured laughter at the loopholes each side detected in the other's negotiating positions. "It was the kind of exchange," he said, "that couldn't have been imagined a year ago."

By Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Qasem, His Royal Highness Prince Ali Ben Al Hussein, His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammed, Foreign Minister Ahmad Karim Kabariti, Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb, Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf and Jordanian Ambassador in Washington Fayez Tarawneh.

On Wednesday, King Hussein discussed with U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry the Jordanian armed forces' needs of modern military equipment and weapons. Mr. Perry said the United States understands Jordan's needs, adding that some of these needs were under study by the U.S. Congress.

The King and Mr. Perry agreed that a high-level joint military meeting should be convened to conduct a comprehensive review of Jordan's military requirements.

During his visit to the U.S. Defence Department, the King was quoted as saying that the Tabia agreement between Israel and the Palestinians was bound to add more momentum to the peace process.

Asked to comment on the defection to Jordan last month of Iraqi General Hussein Kamel, the King said that Gen. Kamel and his party would stay in the Kingdom for the foreseeable future and would not go to any other country.

Mr. Perry was quoted as telling the press that Jordan's request for modern weapons was legitimate and the U.S. sought to work with Jordan in matters of mutual defence and in meeting the Kingdom's needs.

The meeting was attended

Israelis said to seize Lebanon church land

SIDON (AP) — A Christian clergyman Friday accused Israeli troops of seeking to annex land on the Lebanese side of the border with Israel which belonged to his church.

Rev. Nader Abi Nader, a Maronite Catholic priest in Tyre, said church officials have protested the Israeli action to United Nations observers in South Lebanon who promised to look into it.

In a telephone interview from Tyre, some 40 kilometres south of Sidon, provincial capital of South Lebanon, Rev. Abi Nader said the Israelis had moved barbed wire that marked the Lebanese border in the western sector of the enclave they occupy in South Lebanon.

That, he said, put the land — some 10 hectares — in Israeli territory. New wiring was being set up at a location near Baishe in the western sector of an Israeli-occupied border enclave, he said.

Ten days ago, Rev. Abi Nader added, Israeli bulldozers began plowing olive groves that had been damaged by suspected arsonists two months earlier.

"There are fears of takeover and then annexation" of the land, he told the Associated Press.

The land belongs to the Maronite bishopric of Tyre. Bishop Maroun Sader has

gone to the border enclave, know as the "security zone," to try to get the Israelis out, said Rev. Nader.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, which has positions in the area, said it was investigating the claim.

There was no immediate comment from Israel. The Tyre bishop was quoted Friday by the independent Beirut newspaper Al Nahar as saying the church had complained to U.N. authorities in the south "for the sake of preserving the ownership of the property by all legal and international means."

Lebanese military sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it was too early to determine if the Israelis wanted to annex the land or were just clearing the burned trees to possibly set up a new military base.

Lebanon has repeatedly accused Israel of seeking to redraw the border to seize water resources located within the security zone.

Israel has denied the accusations, claiming it has no territorial ambitions in Lebanon.

It says the buffer it created in 1985 on some 1,100 square kilometres of Lebanese territory was intended to prevent cross-border attacks on Israel.

Deal with Syria unlikely in 1996, Rabin is told

The Jerusalem Post

A WRITTEN assessment submitted recently to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by an official government organ contends that the stalemate in talks with Syria is real, and that the November 1996 U.S. election renders progress even less likely.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, however, said yesterday that the time may be ripe to nudge Syria toward peace with Israel.

A cabinet minister close to Rabin said he "generally agrees with the assessment and is in no hurry to initiate any drastic moves in the talks with Syria, especially in light of elections in Israel and the upcoming implementation of the Oslo 2 agreement."

"Rabin was sincerely and genuinely interested in a deal with Syria. In fact, as far as he was concerned there was a 'Syria first' policy in 1993 and for most of 1994. But now we are entering a crucial election year and given the obstacles in the talks with the Syrians, I don't see the government opening a second political front, especially now that the agreement with the Palestinians has been signed."

The strategic advantages of a peace agreement with Syria are tremendous, but the public will not feel its immediate effects. Nor will the public be disadvantaged by the absence of an agreement, the minister said.

The report estimates that President Hafez Al Assad "still shows no signs of urgency in reaching a deal with Israel. He believes that Israel's security demands, as presented by Chief of General Staff Lieutenant-General Amnon Lipkin-Shahak to his Syrian counterpart in Washington last June, are tough and uncompromising and are designed to ensure an Israeli military presence on the Golan Heights."

The report, a periodic assessment of regional developments, also contends that Assad realises the U.S. election is bound to eclipse the Middle East, and that President Bill Clinton will be unable in 1996 to get the financial assistance an Israeli-Syrian deal may require.

Interviewed on NBC's Today show, Christopher said he expressed today's signing of the second-stage Israeli-Palestinian accord to give Syria new reasons to make peace.

"I think it may be the moment to move on the Syrian track. I find that progress on one track tends to encourage the other tracks," he said.

Christopher said he expects to visit the Middle East in the next two or three weeks to press for more progress toward a comprehensive peace.

He did not say whether his next trip would be in conjunction with his previously scheduled attendance of an economic summit in Amman at the end of October or whether he would make a separate trip in advance.

Christopher rejected criticism by his predecessor, James Baker, that the U.S. might not be moving aggressively enough to help bring about an Israeli-Syrian peace.

"In this situation the parties have to be ready," he said. "The Syrian party and the Israeli parties have not been ready... One has to have the sense of the time to move, the moment to move."

Baker said in an interview with Reuters this week that he believes a deal could be made between Israel and Syria, "but I don't think it will happen without some overall assertive diplomacy on the part of the U.S. in the form of presenting options, in trying to break some of the deadlocks involving the security question."

Clinton: Israel fully committed to accord

(Continued from page 1)

dreams, we agreed about the realities."

"I think the best solution, and I am saying it with full respect to Chairman Arafat, will be a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation which would enable all Palestinians to be together and enable us to have those parts of the land important to our security demilitarised," Mr. Peres said.

Asked if there was any reality to Mr. Arafat's dream of a Palestinian state, Mr. Peres said: "I think this is part of his dream, (but) since we've spent so much time together, I know he too is convinced the real solution is a Jordanian-Palestinian framework reality, and this is what will happen in my judgement."

After the signing of the transfer accord at the White House, Mr. Arafat, President Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, along with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein, issued a statement calling on Syria and Lebanon to join a comprehensive Middle East peace.

They said early conclusion of peace treaties between Israel and both Syria and Lebanon "would be key steps toward their common goal of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region."

But Mr. Peres told CBS he was not confident Syria and Lebanon would agree to comprehensive peace.

He said their "idea to conduct negotiations only between military people is a mistake. The idea to conduct the agenda just around the security issue... is another mistake. I think nobody should be timid about peace. We should have to talk about it on all levels and we have to cover all subjects."

Mr. Rabin said Friday Israel intends to pull out of six West Bank towns by the end of the year, but cannot commit to a firm date for completing withdrawal.

The pace of troop withdrawal depends on the construction of bypass roads for Jewish settlers, Mr. Rabin told Israel army radio in an interview from Washington.

"In the wording (of the agreement), there is no commitment although it is our intention" to complete withdrawal by 1995, Mr. Rabin said.

Mr. Rabin's remarks reflected a compromise he

worked out with Mr. Arafat just before the signing of their agreement.

"Arafat first demanded that Israel commit to a troop pullback from the West Bank towns of Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarem, Kalkilya, Ramallah and Bethlehem by the end of December, army radio said. Mr. Rabin refused to set such a deadline, telling Mr. Arafat all depended on how quickly settler bypass roads can be built around Bethlehem and Ramallah. Israel has said it hoped to complete the paving by the end of the year.

"I have a commitment to the settlers not to pull out of Ramallah and Bethlehem before there is an appropriate solution for their travel," Mr. Rabin said on army radio.

In a compromise, the two leaders settled for an Israeli "intention" to withdraw from the six towns by the end of the year.

The agreement already stipulates that Israel has until March 30 to redeploy in the seventh city, Hebron, where 450 Jewish settlers live among 120,000 Palestinians.

The starting date for a troop pullback remained unclear Friday.

Mr. Arafat said Thursday night that the withdrawal would start 10 after the signing ceremony, or around Oct. 8.

However, Israeli officials have said the two sides had not yet agreed on a starting date for a troop withdrawal.

Palestinian opponents of the PLO-Israeli accords staged sit-ins in Lebanon on Friday.

Fifty Palestinian members of popular committees which run refugee camps in the Tyre region of South Lebanon held a peaceful protest strike outside the offices of U.N. peacekeepers in the port city.

They also handed a U.N. peacekeeper a message addressed to U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali denouncing the Tabia accord.

Iran denounced the accord saying Mr. Arafat had betrayed his people and sold out to the Jewish state.

Mr. Yazdi, who was addressing the Friday prayers at Tehran University, said the deal "was doomed in advance, for it can solve nothing" and "each of its clauses represents a concession to the Israelis."

Egypt seeking return of Rosetta Stone from U.K.

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt may seek the return of the Rosetta Stone from Britain to mark the 20th anniversary of the expedition which discovered the slab of basalt providing the key to deciphering hieroglyphics.

"Egypt is considering the possibility of asking UNESCO to intervene with Britain to enable the return of the Rosetta Stone to Egypt," Culture Minister Farouq Hosni told the Arab daily Al Hayat Friday.

The black basalt slab which is 114 centimetres long and 72 centimetres wide has been preserved in the British Museum in London since the 19th century.

It was uncovered during the 1798-1801 French expedition organised by Napoleon Bonaparte to Egypt by army captain Pierre Bouchard during building works in July 1799 near Rosetta, or Rashid, on the Mediterranean.

Inscribed in two languages,

Greek and hieroglyphics, as well as bearing the demotic script it carried a decree of Ptolemy V. Epiphanes drawn up in 190 B.C. in commemoration of his accession to the throne.

The deciphering was the work of two men, Britain's Thomas Young followed by Frenchman Jean-Francois Champollion. Their painstaking translations finally enabled Egyptologists to unlock the secrets of the pharaohs.

But a senior official from the antiquities department, Zahi Hawass, said there was no legal basis for an Egyptian claim.

"Although Egypt has a well-founded and legitimate desire to recover all its pieces from abroad, the agreement on the restitution of antiquities, signed in Rome last April, only gives us the right to recover items taken after 1972," he said.

"It would be better to try to recover the Rosetta Stone through goodwill," he said.

King: No losers in peace

(Continued from page 1)

selflessness. "People cannot continue to live in ivory towers and watch more suffering, uncertainty and turmoil... Egypt, with its weight and position in the hearts of all in our region, was there in times of war and was there to be the first to move to establish peace. The Palestinians, our brethren, have courageously upheld their responsibility towards themselves and the generations to come and all their neighbours who will give them all the support (they) can in the times ahead, for their success will be ours."

"I'd like to say how proud I am of this moment for both (Egyptian) President (Hosni) Mubarak," the King said of the signing of the Israel-PLO agreement, which he described as "another major step on the road to peace in our area, in our part of the world, the cradle of civilisations, the birthplace of the three faiths, Abrahamic religions, the land of the children of Abraham, and their children and their descendants."

"I would like to say how grateful we are for the consistency of thought we have received from our friends in the U.S., while listening to my colleagues speak I saw tears in the eyes for what they said and what I say come from their hearts. We'll never forget all that you've done for us and all that you will continue to do for us for we are partners in the cause of peace, and a better future for all peoples and certainly ours, a peace of the three, a peace that incorporates all that we believe in, democra-

cy, pluralism and respect for human rights, a peace that gives the generations to come the opportunity to build and work together and share their experiences, having conquered the fear of each other that separated them over so many years."

"Both Arabs and Jews have suffered so much. Both come from the same origins, and over a long period of time, certainly my lifetime, there was much suffering and much loss, dear loss to us all."

Addressing President Clinton, the King said:

"These years when you have been at the helm of the great American nation have seen us coming closer together than we have ever been in terms of the trust, mutual respect, and... our relations, for we in Jordan are all friends of the U.S. of America. We have been comforted to know that you are with us through every moment in our endeavour to achieve peace, by your support and understanding, commitment, encouragement, courage, and interest in that worst of causes. And I would recall your being with us, and Mr. Rabin and myself, the Jordanians and the Israelis, all our brethren in the area of Aqaba and Eilat."

"When we saw the ratification of our peace treaty we will also remember the very moving coincidence, moving because... Mrs. Clinton (was) with you on her birthday that coincided with that day. That will remain in the minds of all of us and generations to come for all times. It has been a long way, it has been a long struggle but we

salute the bravery, the courage, moral (and) physical, the faith, the determination of those who have come together today not for the first time, Israelis and Palestinians, in this major step on the path to peace and reconciliation and driving away the shadows of darkness and despair and anger.

"We have to be vigilant because unfortunately there are the sceptics and enemies of peace. But may I venture to say and state categorically that in our three great faiths and religions there is only one call that is predominant and it is the call of tolerance between brothers and between peoples and respect for each other and for life and the fulfilment of our duties as human beings in the worship of God."

"I thank you very very much indeed."

"It is so wonderful to be among so many friends and familiar faces that have become more so every time we meet and every step we take towards the brighter, happier future which, God willing, will be achieved to the generations to come within our area and the world. I think that we are fortunate to have taken more than our share of the interest of the American people at particularly this time with the O.J. Simpson trial."

On Friday, King Hussein met with Mr. Rabin and discussed with him preparations for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit to be held in Amman in November and regional development projects which will help improve standards of living and contribute to enhancing security and stability.

The meeting was attended

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

pected to drop with a chance for scattered showers and winds northwesterly active. In Aqaba, it will be hot with winds northerly moderate and seas calm. On Sunday, temperatures are expected to be southerly active and seas rough.

Min/Max. temp. Amman 20/34 Aqaba 26/41 Deraia 18/36 Jordan Valley 25/39

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 34, Aqaba 41 Humidity readings: Amman 26 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Mubarak Halaish 819220 Dr. Ghaleb Zaidan 734011 Dr. Nidal As'ad 751672 Dr. Yousef Al Faghi 790104 First pharmacy 661912 Al Asana pharmacy 637065 Nairoki pharmacy 637072 Al Salan pharmacy 636730 Yacoub pharmacy 644945 Shamsat pharmacy 637660

Electric Power 636381 RJ Flight Information 08-33200 Queen Alia Int'l Airport 08-33200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 81381332 Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 642816 Akilieh Maternity, J. Amn. 6424412 Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

(Terminal 1)

04:45 Jakarta, Singapore (RJ) 07:00 Dhaka (RJ) 07:00 New Delhi (RJ) 07:00 Agaba (RJ) 07:00 Beirut (RJ) 07:00 Amman (RJ) 07:00 Karachi, Dhaka (RJ) 07:00 Colombo (RJ) 07:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ) 07:00 Cairo, Alexandria (RJ) 07:00 London, Berlin (RJ) 07:00 Vienna (RJ) 07:00 Other Flights (Terminal 2) 03:20 Vienna (OS) 18:10 Damascus (AZ)

12:45 Sharjah, Doha (GP) 14:10 Rome (AZ) 19:35 Cairo (MS) 20:10 Beirut (ME) 20:40 Paris, Damascus (AF) 21:20 Cairo, Damascus (CY) 22:20 Amsterdam (KL) 23:30 London, Damascus (BA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

(Terminal 1)

05:00 Beirut (RJ) 07:00 Amman (RJ) 07:00 Agaba (RJ) 07:00 New Delhi (RJ) 07:00 Agaba (RJ) 07:00 Beirut (RJ) 07:00 Amman (RJ) 07:00 Karachi, Dhaka (RJ) 07:00 Colombo (RJ) 07:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ) 07:00 Cairo, Alexandria (RJ) 07:00 London, Berlin (RJ) 07:00 Vienna (RJ) 07:00 Other Flights (Terminal 2) 03:20 Vienna (OS) 18:10 Damascus (AZ) 18:10 Amsterdam (KL)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 600/400 Banana 680/600 Banana (Mukammur) 170/120 Carrot 220/200 Cauliflower 300/180 Cucumbers (large) 180/120 Cucumbers (small) 300/200 Eggplant 300/230 Figs 700/500 Garlic 700/500 Grapes 700/500 Guava 600/300 Lemon 220/200 Marrow (large) 200/120 Marrow (small) 380/120 Mushrooms 170/120 Okra 850/700 Onion (dry) 220/180 Orange 300/400 Pepper (hot) 240/180 Pepper (sweet) 220/150 Pomegranate 340/250 Potato 280/200 Spinach 300/200 String Beans 750/400 Tomato 100/60 Water Melon 100/70

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
14:30 Back to the Future
14:30 Harry and the Hendersons
15:00 Only in Hollywood
15:30 Soccer Match
17:00 Children's programme — Les Mondes Engoules
17:30 Doc. — Le Bicentenaire du Louvre
18:00 Drama — Operation Open
19:30 News in French
19:45 News in English
19:50 News Headlines
19:55 First Flights
20:00 Major Dad
20:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
21:10 Drama — Cover
22:00 News in English
22:25 Feature film: "Incident in a Small Town"
23:50 The Tin Flute (Pt. 1)

PRAYER TIMES
05:47 Fajr
06:24 Sunrise (Sunrise) Doha
12:24 Dhuhr
15:32 Asr
18:27 Maghreb
19:45 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Hot weather conditions will continue to prevail today with temperatures above average by four degrees centigrade and winds northerly moderate. A cold air mass is expected to affect the Kingdom Sunday, so temperatures are ex-

North said to have missiles near border with S. Korea

SEOUL (Agencies) — North Korea has deployed hundreds of long-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear or chemical warheads near the border with South Korea, the South's air force chief of staff said Friday.

General Kim Hong-Nae told parliament's Defence Committee the Communist North posed a serious military threat to the South by deploying more than 600 Frog rockets and Scud missiles.

It was not clear from the general's remarks whether the deployment was a recent development.

The South Korean capital Seoul is within range of Frog rockets while Scud missiles could reach every corner of the south, he said. "Should the North attack (the South) with the missiles loaded with nuclear or chemical warheads, it would have serious military consequences," Gen. Kim told the committee.

But Gen. Kim said his air force had taken steps to cope with any North Korean attack, including plans to strike the North's tactical ballistic missile bases, command posts and communications facilities.

He said combined South Korea-U.S. forces were using three satellites to monitor North Korea and monthly exercises were conducted as part of the awareness measures.

North Korea has strengthened its already massive

military equipment and facilities, most of them underground, according to the South Korean Defence Ministry.

The ministry said the North had successfully test-fired a Rodong-1 missile with a range of 1,000 kilometres and was developing the Daepodong-1 and 2 missiles capable of striking major targets in north East Asia, including Japan. It also maintains production of chemical weapons.

About 655,000 South Korean troops, bolstered by some 37,000 U.S. forces, face the North's 1,040,000-strong army across the world's last cold war border which was set up at the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

South Korea's foreign minister appealed Thursday to the North to embrace human rights and abandon nuclear weapons aspirations. The comments drew a sharp rebuttal from North Korea.

"My government strongly believes that the people in North Korea, as our kindred, should enjoy the fundamental human rights to which all of us are entitled," South Korean Foreign Minister Gong Ro-myung said.

Mr. Gong told the U.N. General Assembly his country was particularly concerned about families divided by the 1950-53 Korean War.

Ten million Koreans were separated from their families during the war, many

never to hear from their relatives again because contact was prohibited between the Koreas, he said.

"It is high time for the community of nations, particularly the United Nations, to render their assistance and do their part for these divided families to at least hear from each other until they are finally united," Mr. Gong said.

Mr. Gong also urged North Korea to abide by the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and its nuclear pact with the United States.

"The North Korean nuclear issue remains a paramount security concern for north East Asia and the world," he said.

Mr. Gong's comments prompted a withering exchange between North Korean and South Korean representatives during a General Assembly rebuttal session Thursday evening.

North Korean representative Choe Tong U accused Mr. Gong of "ignorance" and said "he attempted to hurl mud at us and mislead the world public."

Mr. Choe said South Korea put its own prohibitions on family contacts with the North and said its nuclear agreement was with the United States only.

"South Korea has no say on the nuclear issue," Mr. Choe said. "They just better sit quiet and look what is going on."

South Korean representative Kyu Hyung Lee rebutted what he called the

"distortions," defending his country's human rights record and saying North Korea had drawn international condemnation over its suspected nuclear weapons programme.

Under the 1994 agreement, North Korea said it would shut down its nuclear programme, which is suspected of trying to produce nuclear weapons.

"Maintaining peace and stability on the Korean peninsula is not just an issue affecting 70 million Koreans, but also a strategic issue with critical implications for the north East Asia region and the world at large," Mr. Gong said earlier.

Mr. Gong spoke as North and South Korea held talks on food aid for the flood-stricken North. In a historic first for the two Koreas, the South agreed in June to provide its poor neighbour with 150,000 tons of free rice.

In a swipe at France, which resumed nuclear testing in the South Pacific this fall, Mr. Gong urged "those nations with future plans for testing to cancel them without delay."

Mr. Gong also announced that South Korea will impose a one-year moratorium on exports of anti-personnel land mines.

Human rights organisations are campaigning for a global ban on land mines, which, according to the United Nations, kill or maim more than 20,000 civilians a year.



Shirley Baker, sister of O. J. Simpson, talks to the press at the Criminal Courts building in Los Angeles. Along with Mrs. Baker are (from left) Simpson's sister, Carmelita Durio; Benny Baker, Mrs. Baker's husband; Eunice, Simpson's mother, in wheelchair; Arnette, daughter of Simpson, and Jason, Simpson's son (AFP photo)

Simpson jury to get case after passionate arguments

LOS ANGELES (R) — The jury in the "trial of the century" of star athlete O.J. Simpson, which has gripped television audiences around the world, was due to get the case Friday after impassioned closing arguments by both sides.

Simpson's lead defence attorney Johnnie Cochran, in an appeal to the panel of nine blacks, two whites and one Hispanic which sounded as much like the exhortations of an evangelist as the reasoned arguments of a lawyer, said Thursday they must find the athletic legend not guilty.

Mr. Cochran's colleague, Barry Scheck, an expert on the highly complicated subject of scientific DNA testing, tried to show that blood evidence in the case had either been planted by police or contaminated by shoddy laboratory procedures.

The final setting on a stage that has captured the imagination and attention of millions since the June 12, 1994, murders of Simpson's ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman, has unfolded over the last three days as prosecutors and the defence have sought to sway the hearts and minds of the 10 women and two men who will decide the fate of the man who became an American icon.

Simpson, whose fame on the American football field was followed by a career as an actor, sportscaster and TV pitchman, has pleaded innocent to the vicious stabbing murders outside his ex-wife's home.

Prosecutor Marcia Clark was scheduled to address the jury to rebut the emotional arguments of Mr. Cochran and the more measured, scientific theories of Mr. Scheck. Judge Lance Ito was then to give the panel its final instructions.

Mr. Cochran closed out his discourse uttering the same rhyming couplet he started with — "if it doesn't fit, you must acquit" — a reference not only to the bulk of the prosecution's evidence but to its most embarrassing moment, when Simpson was asked to put on the bloody evidence gloves and appeared to struggle to do so.

Summoning up all the fire and brimstone of a revival preacher, Mr. Cochran Thursday detailed what he said was a vast conspiracy led by a racist rogue cop to frame Simpson for a crime he did not commit.

He told the mostly black jury they could strike a blow against racism and police corruption by returning a not guilty verdict. "Stop this cover-up," Mr. Cochran implored.

But outside the courtroom, Fred Goldman, the father of murder victim Ron Goldman, exploded with anger at Mr. Cochran. "He suggests...that it's because of racism we should put aside all other thoughts, all other reason, and set his murdering client free," Mr. Goldman said. "He's a sick man."

In a summation laced with references to the U.S. constitution, the Magna Carta and the Bible, Mr. Cochran accused police of falsely

implicating Simpson in "a rush to judgment."

At the centre of the alleged plot, Mr. Cochran placed now-retired detective Mark Fuhrman, whom he likened to Adolf Hitler and called a "lying, perjuring, genocidal racist."

Mr. Cochran reminded jurors that the white detective lied under oath when he said he had not uttered the racial epithet "nigger" in the past 10 years, only to be contradicted by excerpts of taped interviews with an aspiring screenwriter.

Mr. Cochran went a step further, accusing Mr. Fuhrman of planting the bloody glove he testified to finding at Simpson's estate, and of stamping a bloody shoe print in Simpson's Ford Bronco. He said the conspiracy also encompassed other officials.

Mr. Cochran urged jurors to throw out all of the crucial prosecution evidence he says was tainted by conspiracy, which would effectively gut the state's case. "We believe that you will do the right thing and find this man not guilty."

As he ended his nationally televised summation, Mr. Cochran challenged Ms. Clark to answer 15 questions he said proved "reasonable doubt" of Simpson's guilt.

And in a final appeal, Mr. Cochran stood in front of a family portrait and intoned: "Someone has taken these children's mother. I hope your decision doesn't take their father."

Simpson faces up to life in prison if convicted.

Chinese party purges former Beijing chief; approves five-year plan

BEIJING (AP) — China's Communist Party leaders purged a powerful colleague for corruption Thursday but honoured the tradition of sparing him criminal punishment.

The Central Committee stripped former Beijing party secretary Chen Xitong of his seats in both the committee and the elite, policy-making politburo, and recommended kicking him from the national legislature.

Mr. Chen is the highest-ranking leader to be brought down in a more than two-year-old anti-corruption drive the party hopes will clean up its tainted public image.

But Mr. Chen's fall also is believed to be linked to backstage power politics as party leaders manoeuvre for primacy in anticipation of the death of the ailing senior leader, 91-year-old Deng Xiaoping.

Mr. Chen, 65, rose through local party ranks to become mayor and party secretary of the nation's capital, allowing him to work closely with the central government and party leaders and eventually win posts in top party organs. His uncompromising stance toward the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protesters boosted his standing.

His fall from grace came abruptly in April when a former protégé, Deputy Mayor Wang Baosen, com-

mitted suicide just as he was about to be exposed for embezzling \$35 million in public funds.

Mr. Chen, who was promoted from mayor to Beijing party secretary in 1992, resigned soon after.

In a communique released at the end of a closed-door, four-day meeting, the Central Committee said Mr. Chen "seriously neglected his duty and held a grave responsibility" for Wang's wrongdoing.

The committee said Mr. Chen also "led a dissolute, extravagant life, abused his power to seek illegal interests for his relatives and accepted valuable gifts for his own use.... His mistakes are serious."

The committee statement, summarised by the official Xinhua News Agency, said that the party's investigation into Mr. Chen would continue but made no mention of a criminal investigation.

A party investigator told reporters several months ago that officials were considering handing Mr. Chen over to police.

The party traditionally punishes its members internally and subjecting Mr. Chen to legal prosecution would have been a strong statement of determination to root out endemic corruption.

Its failure to do so bolstered the belief that his real mistake was opposing party General Secretary Jiang Zemin's bid to succeed Mr.

Deng.

The national television news showed the Central Committee members, gathered in a hotel auditorium decorated with red flags and a hammer and sickle, raising their right arms to approve the communique. Mr. Chen was not shown on screen and it was not known if he attended.

Xinhua said 176 committee members, 125 alternate members and numerous non-voting party officials attended.

The committee did not reveal details of Mr. Chen's alleged corruption. Mr. Wang allegedly spent the funds he embezzled on his relatives, friends and mistresses. The party investigator said officials were trying to sort out which funds were stolen by Mr. Wang and which by Mr. Chen.

In other actions, the Central Committee approved a five-year plan to guide China's economy through the last years of the century.

The communique said the plan will see China meet the goal set by senior leader Deng Xiaoping in 1980 of quadrupling gross national product by the year 2000.

"Poverty will be basically eliminated (and) the people's life will reach a relatively comfortable standard," the communique said.

Gambia bans skin-bleaching in civil service

BANJUL (R) — Military leaders in the west African state of Gambia have banned the practice of skin-bleaching in the civil service, threatening disciplinary action against anyone found indulging in the practice. A government memo, which denounced skin-bleaching on health grounds, said there had been an upsurge in the practice, particularly among women civil servants. "These ladies are expected to set a better example," it said. Particularly those in the health and education sectors, "according to the circular, which was sent to all heads of ministries and government departments. The armed forces Provisional Ruling Council condemned the practice shortly after it seized power in July 1994. "At its last meeting, council expressed concern that although skin bleaching had noticeably declined, there is now increasing evidence of the practice," the memo, from the office of military leader Yahya Jammeh, said. A range of skin lightening products are available across west Africa but doctors advise against using them on the grounds that they can damage the skin. The memo did not specify what disciplinary action would be taken.

Missing tortoise turns up after 35 years

LYDE, England (AFP) — Thirty-five years after Chester disappeared from his master's back garden, the escaped tortoise has turned up no more than metres from his original home. Chester was discovered last week ambling along a verge in this central English village by local resident Flossie Massbder, who cleaned him up and set out to track down his owner. Malcolm Edwards, 44, who still lives in his boyhood home 150 yards from where Chester was found, recognised his long lost pet immediately because of the white paint Mark his father had put on the shell in 1960 to make the creature easier to spot in the grass. Edwards was eight years old when Chester joined the family menagerie of rabbits, an owl, a magpie and goldfish. George Cooper, the local vet who examined Chester after his reappearance, said it was perfectly feasible the tortoise could have survived in local woodland all those years. "He would have had food in abundance, including dandelions, fruit, grass and vegetables," he told journalists. Edwards said he hoped Chester "might decide to stay a little longer this time."

Man jailed for abusing cow

COLOMBO (AP) — A suburban court in the capital has sentenced a man for having sexual relations with a cow, a police official said. Weerasangille Siriwardhana, 30, a bachelor who earned his living as a daily wage, was given a suspended sentence of three months imprisonment, and fined 1,500 rupees (\$29) by magistrate Maheshi Gunatileke. He had pleaded guilty to the charge of "having an unnatural relationship with a cow," said a police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Mr. Siriwardhana had been discovered with the animal in the cow owner's back yard. The owner filed a complaint against Mr. Siriwardhana after the incident occurred last November in Migahawatta, near Colombo. Mr. Siriwardhana was also convicted by the court for raping a woman in the same neighbourhood two weeks before he was caught with the cow. For that, he was given another three months in jail.

S. Korean students clash with police; thousands march in support

SEOUL (AP) — Hundreds of students in Seoul clashed with police and some 5,000 more marched and rallied in support Thursday in continuing violence to demand punishment for two former presidents.

The protest came a day before the National Assembly was to vote on an opposition party bill that would open the way to prosecute ex-presidents Chun Doo-Hwan and Roh Tae-Won for their alleged roles in the deaths of more than 200 civilians 15 years ago.

As some 200 students Thursday chanted and sang encouragement, their leaders buried firebombs at riot police in front of Konkook University.

"Punish the butchers" they chanted. Police fired dozens of volleys of tear gas to push the students back. Flickering fire from the

Molotov cocktails dotted the street.

One student suffered burns on his face when a firebomb hit a nearby tree and exploded. But with both sides keeping their distance, no other injuries were reported.

Students used 1.5-metre (5-foot-) long metal pipes to bang on the asphalt to the beat of the incessant drums. Some 600 more students at three other universities in Seoul also clashed violently with police.

About 1,000 more students held a peaceful candlelight march in another part of Seoul, and 3,000 others held rallies at their campuses.

Some 1,000 students also marched in downtown Kwangju, some 270 kilometres south of Seoul, where more than 200 people were killed and thou-

sands more injured during a crackdown on a pro-democracy uprising in May, 1980. Students have vowed more protests if the bill does not pass.

An umbrella group of student councils said that 80 out of some 120 four-year universities nationwide will take part in a two-day boycott of classes to increase pressure.

Instead of going to classes Friday and Saturday, they have called for mass rallies and demonstrations. Some 15,000 police have been deployed in Seoul, and security heightened at the legislature and other government buildings.

Dozens more students are on a week-long hunger strike, and thousands of teachers and professors have signed petitions demanding a special law be enacted.

Indian Congress wants April elections

NEW DELHI (R) — India's Election Commission said Thursday after a meeting with the country's political parties that the ruling Congress Party wanted the next parliamentary elections to be held in the second half of April.

Elections must be held by mid-1996 and a new lower house of parliament must be in place by July 8.

The (ruling) Indian National Congress and the (opposition) Janata Party wanted the poll to be held sometime in the second half of April, 1996," the Election Commission said in a statement after the all-party meeting on elections.

But Chief Election Commissioner T.N. Seshan told a news conference that the commission had the constitutional power to hold elections any time after Jan. 7, marking six months from the last possible date for a new parliament to be constituted.

The Election Commission would consider factors like annual school examinations before deciding on the date, Mr. Seshan said.

India is scheduled to hold the World Cup Cricket Championship in February and March and Election Commission officials have said they would consider the implications of the tournament.

Doubts had been expressed over an April date because it was thought that the cricket-loving nation, also the world's biggest democracy, would find it difficult to juggle the logistics of the tournament with poll campaigns.

The commission would consider the opinion of all parties, but take its own decision, Mr. Seshan said. "After seventh January, we are competent to recommend elections any time."

Rebels kill 22 policemen in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil guerrillas killed 22 Sri Lankan policemen in an apparent bid to undercut an expected government offensive after the army warned civilians to stay away from rebel bases, military sources said Friday.

An army spokesman confirmed the attack on the Kalkudah police post in the eastern district of Batticaloa, saying his information indicated 15 policemen were killed but adding that the death toll could rise. "Terrorists came in large numbers," he told Reuters.

"We sent reinforcements and the police post is now back in our hands. A clearing operation is going on."

The attack by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels, who are fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the island's north and east, began late Thursday night and lasted till the early hours of Friday, military sources said.

Analysts said the LTTE attack appeared to part of its campaign to pin down the eastern garrisons to prevent them from joining a major offensive on the Jaffna peninsula, expected to be launched before the start of October monsoon rains.

It also followed what diplomats said may have

been a signal from the army Thursday that the war was hotting up in Jaffna.

Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe, the chief military spokesman, told a news conference Thursday that the army was planning to intensify its attacks on the bases on Jaffna.

Brig. Munasinghe also conceded that air force planes may have killed 70 people in last week's bombings in Jaffna and asked civilians to keep away from Tamil Tiger bases to avoid future casualties.

The London-based human rights group Amnesty International said Monday that some 800,000 civilians were at risk of being caught in the crossfire between the LTTE and the army.

"We reiterate one thing in appeals made hitherto by us to civilians in Jaffna, please keep away from LTTE bases, processions and ceremonies," Brig. Munasinghe said.

"We are attacking the LTTE. We have to do that. Therefore, we are only requesting very kindly to the civilians, kindly keep away," he warned.

Brig. Munasinghe said the large civilian presence was hampering army operations in the region where more than 50,000 people have been killed in the 12-year-old war.

"If we are not concerned with this factor then we can go on bombing and shelling," he said. "But we are not doing it and we are not going to do it."

He said the schoolchildren, apparently killed in last week's air raids, may have been LTTE members.

"We know the LTTE have taken over many school buildings to make them their bases. The LTTE has also conscripted children, 10 and 12 years old. As a soldier, if they fire on us, I am bound to respond with fire," he said.

The remarks raised eyebrows among diplomatic circles.

"Is this a warning that the offensive is starting?" Wondered one senior diplomat. "There have been conflicting signals recently, but this one sounds like they mean business."

Some diplomats and analysts had speculated earlier that the army's widely expected offensive on the LTTE bases could be running out of time as imminent October rains may bog down the conventional army against the fleet-footed guerrillas.

"It looks more and more remote with each new day," said a senior diplomat Thursday. "The campaign is running out of time."

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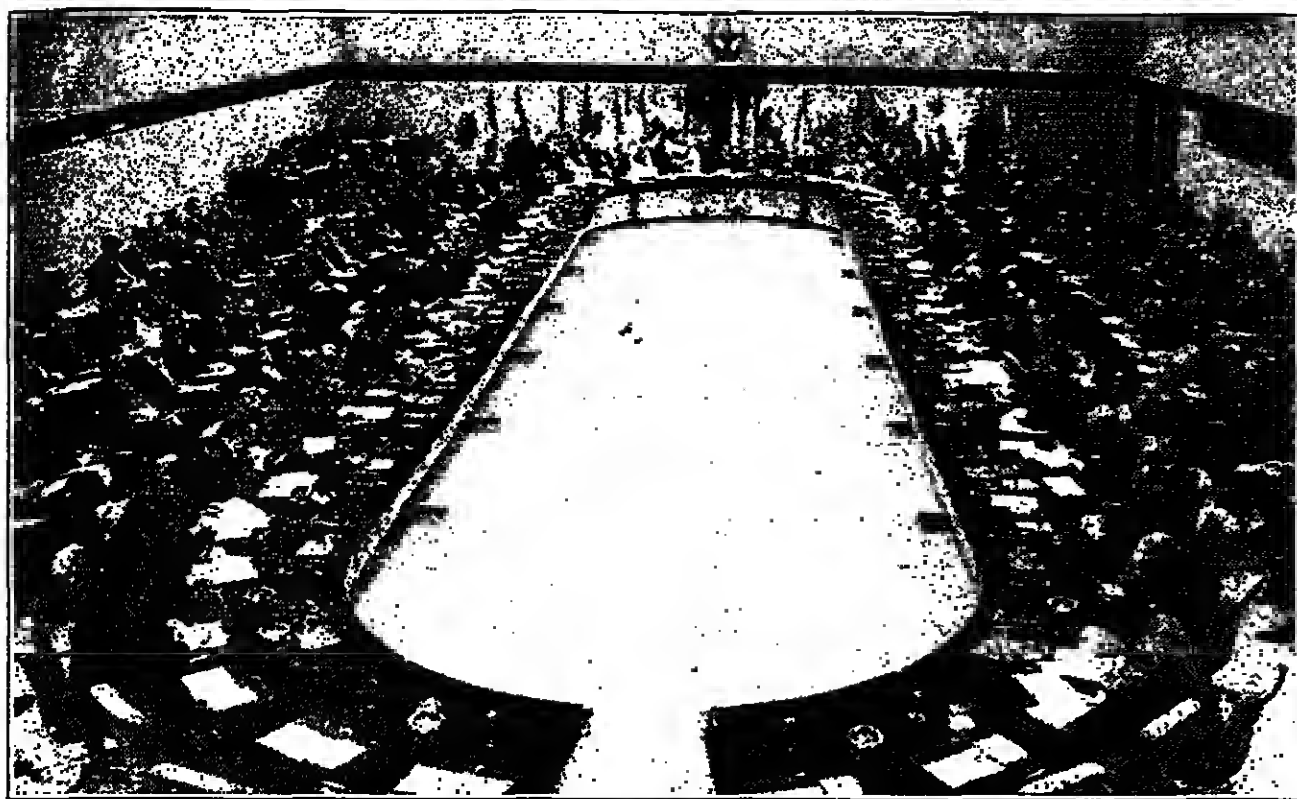
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North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) ambassadors meet at the alliance's headquarters in Brussels (AFP photo)

Russia rejects NATO enlargement eastwards

BRUSSELS (R) — Russia remains implacably opposed to NATO's plans to extend its security umbrella right up to the country's western borders, Russia's ambassador to Brussels, Vitaly Churkin said.

"What we have seen so far is not enough for us to change our minds about the prospects of NATO enlargement. Feelings are very strong about this in Russia," Mr. Churkin said as he left a meeting between NATO and more than 20 members of the alliance's partnership for peace programme.

NATO presented its enlargement plan, which extends the nuclear umbrella eastwards and reserves the right to position troops and weapons in the region if necessary, to the partners Thursday.

Mr. Churkin told reporters Russia was firmly against the move.

"We are still against it. The matter has not been thought through in the context of overall European security," he said.

Earlier Alliance Secretary General Willy Claes tried to smooth ruffled Russian feathers by saying NATO would remain a defensive military alliance and threaten no one when it takes in new members from former Communist East Europe.

"The alliance is striving to develop a stable, strong, active and constructive relationship with Russia as one cornerstone of a new, inclusive and comprehensive security structure in Europe," he said.

Mr. Claes repeated NATO's assertion that Alliance expansion would underpin the new democracies of Eastern and Central Europe. Only countries with democratic civilian control of the armed forces would be considered suitable, he said.

Countries interested in joining the Alliance, led by Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the Baltic states, will follow up the meeting with more detailed discussions with NATO officials in their respective capitals.

In an apparent concession to Moscow, the enlargement plan stresses that extension of the nuclear umbrella will not happen automatically, but it reaffirms the nuclear doctrine as the "supreme guarantee" of the security of Alliance states.

"The supreme guarantee of the security of the allies is provided by the strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance," it states, later adding:

"NATO should retain its existing nuclear capabilities with the right to modify its nuclear posture as circumstances warrant."

Defence sources say that message will be "received loud and clear" in Moscow.

"Whatever happens, the nuclear umbrella is extended to the new countries. Weapons do not have to be on their territory for that, but they could be and that is of course what these states want," said one NATO source.

Mr. Claes said NATO enlargement would be a parallel process and would complement the planned enlargement of the European Union and take place at the same time as efforts to build a special relationship with Russia.

"The alliance is striving to develop a stable, strong, active and constructive relationship with Russia as one cornerstone of a new, inclusive and comprehensive security structure in Europe," he said.

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Anti-terrorism plan imposed on French Polynesia

PAPEETE, Tahiti (R) — France has clamped emergency "anti-terrorism" measures on French Polynesia and some Papeete residents have hired security guards, fearing more violence after a second nuclear test which is expected within days.

The Vigipirate plan, first used in 1986 when Paris was besieged by a wave of Middle East-related bombings, has stepped up the police and army presence on the streets of the Tahitian capital, a French high commission spokesman told Reuters Thursday.

"Vigipirate is a great mobilisation of police and army forces against terrorism," said spokesman Emmanuel Martin.

A letter from the high commissioner of the French territory dated Sept. 25 and received by business leaders Thursday said Vigipirate was imposed "a few days ago" after they requested better protection.

"I am glad to let you know that with the Vigipirate plan

I have started a few days ago, armed forces are carrying out missions for which they have been specifically trained," wrote Anne Boquet on behalf of the commissioner.

"As far as the security is concerned in the town of Papeete, re-inforced patrols are going through the street, night and day to ensure a deterrent force... and they also represent a capacity for intervention," wrote Ms. Boquet, the commissioner's secretary. Renters received a copy of the letter.

Mr. Martin however denied the plan was imposed in Tahiti out of fears that the next nuclear test will again spark riots in the capital. Riots scarred Papeete after testing resumed on Sept. 5.

He said the plan was imposed here under a recent order that Vigipirate be extended across France and all its territories to guard against an escalation of terrorist bombings that have hit Paris in recent months.

Reinforcements have brought to more than 800 the number of gendarmes now deployed in and around Papeete, compared with barely 300 or so police during the riots.

On Thursday trucks of Gendarmes and anti-riot police patrolled Papeete's rain-soaked streets or were stationed where crowds gathered, such as a trade fair on the outskirts of town.

The high commission said security in Tahiti was "softer" here than in metropolitan France, but local business leaders welcomed Vigipirate, saying it met their request for protection.

"Now we have the Vigipirate plan... The army and police are working together to give protection to the people," said Dr. Charles Fichter, president of the Civil Protection Association.

"I think it is a good thing for us and I hope in future the city is much more protected than the first time," Dr. Fichter said.

The association was formed after the violence of the first test which saw Papeete burned and looted in a 36-hour battle between rock-throwing rioters and police.

Dr. Fichter has boarded up the windows and door to his surgery in downtown Papeete. "Some shopowners are protected by vigilantes, but it's private protection," he said.

There are about six or seven "vigilante" groups, consisting of five or six bodyguards, he said.

Residents fear that if violence erupts again rioters may target residential homes because of the big police and army presence in the city centre, he added.

"The people are scared," said shopkeeper Mairie Wilson, who has hired private bodyguards. "There are echoes it might start up again," she said from inside her dress shop which had newly-erected iron bars on all its windows.

Dole emphasises personal side in new video

WASHINGTON (R) — Front-running Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole is taking a new tack to hoist his campaign, mailing to voters thousands of videos featuring homespun scenes with a rare talk about his World War II heroics.

The film was seen as an attempt by Sen. Dole to show his human side and soften some hard edges of his personality. A man with a biting wit, in the past he has earned a reputation as a bitter partisan.

Polls for Republican presidential candidates currently place Sen. Dole first by a wide margin, but he has been slipping in surveys recently.

The campaign spotlight is currently occupied by retired General Colin Powell and speculation on whether he will enter the race.

Polls show that if Gen.

Powell ran as a Republican, he would be neck and neck with Sen. Dole.

Some 85,000 copies of the 14-minute video will be distributed to would-be supporters in state-wide contests where people will vote for their presidential preferences starting in February.

A campaign aide said 49,000 of the videos, which cost \$60,000 to film, will go to Republicans in Iowa who will hold state-wide caucuses Feb. 12 to determine their choice for the party presidential nominee.

An initial 5,000 tapes are being sent to New Hampshire, which holds a presidential preference primary Feb. 20, and more will be sent there later.

The video — called Bob Dole, An American Hero — is reminiscent of Bill Clinton's video of his life shown in his successful 1992 campaign, called the

"man from hope".

"It's an effort to tell a more personal story than to do a laundry list of issues," said Sen. Dole's Press Secretary Nelson Warfield. "That's a very positive attribute of the film. It tells you who the man is rather than just a dry recitation of his record or his promises on issues. And that is going to be more important in the next president — who the man is."

As in the Clinton film, there are bazy soft country scenes, a girl on a swing and a folksy talk by Sen. Dole sitting beside his wife, Elizabeth, about his World War II experiences.

Sen. Dole rarely discusses his wartime exploits when he was wounded and nearly died during fighting in Italy in 1945 as a 21-year-old army lieutenant.

He entered the war a strapping, six-foot-two-inch (1.87-metre), 190-pounder

(86 kg) but came out at 120 pounds (54 kg) and unable to walk. He never regained the use of his right arm.

The video virtually ignores the Dole most people are familiar with as a legislator, current Senate majority leader and a veteran of nearly 35 years in Congress.

He is now making his fourth bid for national office after losing as President Gerald Ford's 1976 running mate and failing to capture his party's presidential nomination in 1980 and 1988.

Sen. Dole, at 72, is the oldest candidate in a crowded field of Republicans and the only one with World War II military experience. If nominated and elected he would be, at 73, the oldest president ever at his first inauguration.

Mercenaries take control of Comoros

NAIROBI (R) — A mercenary force led by French soldier of fortune Bob Denard took power in the Comoros Friday after crushing poorly-equipped government soldiers overnight, residents said.

The residents, contacted by telephone from Nairobi, said a new ruling military committee headed by a Captain Kombo had appealed to residents in a radio broadcast to remain calm. It promised swift justice for former government officials in the Indian Ocean archipelago.

The little-known Capt. Kombo also promised pluralist elections as soon as possible.

"Kombo came on our national radio and announced that his forces had taken power after defeating government forces in the night," said Ali Said Athouman, a director at the Comoros Chamber of Commerce and Reunions.

He added: "Kombo also said his forces had rounded up government troops and locked them up in the main barracks. They are also going round houses picking up government ministers and officials."

The takeover came shortly after France said it had put its armed forces in the Indian Ocean on alert after the Denard mercenaries staged a coup bid in the Comoro Islands.

But a Defence Ministry spokesman said there were no immediate plans to intervene in the former French colony.

"The alert is automatic as soon as there is trouble in the area. There are no plans for intervention at this point," he said.

The Comoros government had appealed to France to help restore order under a defence accord with its former colony.

The French defence spokesman said Paris had a 130-man Foreign Legion combat company on Mayotte, a nearby Comoro Island which chose to remain French when the archipelago declared independence in 1975.

It has more troops on the Indian Ocean island of La Reunion, as well as a helicopter-carrying frigate, a transport ship and two 400-tonne gunboats.

The ships could reach Comoros in 48 hours if President Jacques Chirac

ordered an intervention.

The Comorian embassy in Paris denied government troops had surrendered but Mr. Athouman said the mercenary group was firmly in charge.

"They (mercenaries) are all over the streets. There is no government soldier in sight," he said.

Mr. Athouman said fighting had stopped in the capital Moroni.

The coup bid started early Thursday when the rebels led by Denard, a former head of the Comoros Presidential Guard, seized President Said Mohammad Djohar.

They later captured the radio station and the airport. South Africa said Friday it was consulting with the French authorities over the latest situation on the Comoros, where mercenary soldiers had staged a coup.

"Our first concern is for the welfare of the South Africans on the islands and we are consulting with the French authorities on an ongoing basis in order to establish the latest facts," a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said.

South African tour operators and the Foreign

Ministry said 104 South Africans and 40 Europeans, mainly Germans, had been due to leave the islands Thursday but their flight was cancelled because of the coup.

They were now expected to leave Saturday.

The Foreign Ministry said South African authorities would investigate a report on state radio in Johannesburg that the mercenaries had apparently flown with their weapons to the Comoros from South Africa.

"As far as the allegations are concerned, these will be fully investigated by the relevant South African authorities," the spokeswoman said.

"Our statement on mercenaries is very clear. We do not condone them at all," she said.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Friday quoted unnamed "mercenary sources" as saying the coup plotters were flown from South Africa.

It quoted the sources as saying a man by the name of Gibert had been recruiting mercenaries in South Africa in recent weeks.

Photos show Andreotti with mafia businessman

ROME (R) — An Italian magazine published photographs Friday of former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, who is on trial for mafia association, in the company of a mob-tainted businessman he claims he never knew.

The two pictures in the weekly Panorama magazine show the seven-times former premier in the same room as Nino Salvo, who with his cousin Ignazio Salvo headed tax collection agencies in Sicily.

Sicilian magistrates determined that the cousins, whose virtual monopoly on tax collection in parts of the island gave them immense power, had close links to the mafia.

Ignazio Salvo was killed in a mafia ambush in 1992. Nino Salvo died a natural death.

Mr. Andreotti says he did not know the Salvo cousins, who were among the most

powerful men in Sicily and benefactors of the Sicilian wing of his Christian Democratic Party.

One of the two photographs shows Nino Salvo just behind Mr. Andreotti as the statesman was entering the lobby of Palermo's Zagarella Hotel in 1979 for a political rally.

The other photo, taken on the same day, shows Nino Salvo about one metre away from Mr. Andreotti in the same lobby.

Mr. Andreotti said he had seen the pictures several years ago when magistrates first levelled charges against him. "There is nothing new here to support the prosecution's claims," he said in a statement on the magazine report.

The 76-year-old life senator, whose trial opened in the Sicilian capital last Tuesday, says the presence of Nino Salvo among hundreds of other people at a

political rally does not prove that they were acquainted.

Magistrates who are prosecuting Mr. Andreotti on mafia charges say it would have been impossible for Mr. Andreotti not to know the Salvo cousins.

One mafia turncoat, Baldassare Di Maggio, alleges Ignazio Salvo was also present at a meeting between Mr. Andreotti and Salvatore "Totò" Riina in 1987 when the "boss of bosses" was still at large. Mr. Andreotti denies the meeting took place.

The cousins had close links to Salvo Lima, a European parliamentarian who was the leader of a wing of Mr. Andreotti's party in Sicily. He was killed by the mafia in 1992.

A magistrates report said Lima was killed because he stopped protecting organised crime's interests after years of collusion.

According to magistrates, the Salvo cousins also helped organise the murder in 1979 of Mino Pecorelli, a muck-raking journalist who was about to publish sensitive information about the Christian Democratic Party's financing methods.

The prosecution alleges the mafia ordered Pecorelli's killing as a favour to Mr. Andreotti. In a recent book outlining his defence, Mr. Andreotti says: "I had very little to do with Pecorelli."

The Andreotti trial resumes on Oct. 6 when the judge is due to rule on a defence request to move the proceedings to Rome or the central Italian city of Perugia, where the Pecorelli case will be heard.

Mr. Andreotti has denied all charges against him as a mafia plot to punish him for crackdowns on crime by governments he headed.

Japan coalition official calls for April election

TOKYO (R) — A top official in the party headed by Trade Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto urged Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama to step down by next April to make way for a provisional government headed by Mr. Hashimoto, a Japanese daily reported Friday.

Mr. Hashimoto should then call general elections, said Taku Yamazaki, head of policy affairs for the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the highest group in Mr. Murayama's ruling coalition.

"The pitcher should retire from the mound and come back to the bench after completing a game," he said, using baseball terms.

"In this case, the end of a complete game is when the annual budget passes through parliament (by the end of March)," he told the daily Sankei Shimbun.

Since Mr. Hashimoto's election last week as head of the LDP, Tokyo political circles have been awash with talk of a possible breakup of the three-way coalition and early general elections.

The earliest date for snap polls is December, after Japan hosts the Nov. 16-19 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Osaka, and the latest by June next year after the

end of the regular six-month parliament session.

Mr. Murayama need not call elections until mid-1997, but a split in the coalition of his Socialists, the conservative LDP and the small Sakigake Party would automatically trigger one.

Parliament reconvened Friday for a 46-day special session to discuss a five trillion Yen (\$50 billion) extra budget, part of Tokyo's latest attempt to get the economy moving.

The budget is not under direct threat from the opposition but debate on a revision of the religious institution act, prompted by allegations against the Aum

doomsday cult that include a poison gas attack on the Tokyo subway, could delay the extra budget.

The main opposition Shinshinto (New Frontier Party) is backed by a powerful Buddhist organisation which is trying to block the introduction of tighter controls on religious groups.

Mr. Murayama's Socialist Party is in disarray over a plan to disband itself and form a new "liberal" party in a merger with other left-of-centre groups. Its target date is the end of November.

Interpol seeks more cooperation with U.N.

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Increased collaboration between Interpol and the United Nations and the creation of two regional agencies in Africa will be discussed at Interpol's General Assembly Oct. 4-10 in Beijing, Interpol President Bjorn Eriksson said Friday.

"There is a possibility for a wider and regular cooperation between the United Nations and our organisation," Mr. Eriksson, who is also the head of the Swedish police, told AFP.

"It could be developed so that the U.N. has the option of delivering certain police tasks to Interpol," he said.

According to Mr. Eriksson, international police cooperation against crime is in line with efforts by the United Nations to protect people against abuses of power and human rights violations.

The representatives of

Interpol's 176 members in Beijing are also expected to approve the creation of two regional agencies in Africa: Afropol West based in Abidjan on the Ivory Coast and grouping 14 Francophone states, and Afropol East in Harare, Zimbabwe and composed of about ten Anglophone countries.

"It is important to try to create a regional cooperation between our African member states, which is not contradictory to the global character of Interpol," Mr. Eriksson said, noting that "Interpol lacks an instrument to carry out this cooperation in Africa."

As elsewhere, crimes have no borders on the African continent, he said, citing as an example the sale of stolen cars between countries, often paid for with drugs, or money laundering and weapons sales.

Congress backs C-17 in defence spending bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress is lining up behind the troubled C-17 transport plane as it prepares to send President Bill Clinton a defence bill with \$7 billion more for the military than the White House requested.

Defence spending legislation expected to win final approval in the House of Representatives endorses the costly air force craft although the Pentagon hasn't decided whether to buy more. A report released Wednesday by the House-Senate Conference Committee that wrote the bill also backs the C-17.

The legislation orders that the Pentagon "must give first priority to fully funding" of continued C-17 production in 1997.

The defence acquisition board, a key Pentagon decision-making body, is set to recommend by Nov. 1 whether to build a fleet of 120 C-17s. Under current plans, the air force would build 40 airlifters for a total cost of \$21.3 billion, or \$533 million a plane.

The bill contains \$2.4 billion for the last eight of those 40 planes, which are built by McDonnell Douglas Corp. in southern California.

Rep. Bill Young, chairman of the House Appropriations National Security Subcommittee, said the House-Senate report reflected increasing confidence within the military in the C-17, a plane once so beset with engineering and performance problems that the Pentagon nearly canceled it.

"The problems that have existed in the past have been pretty much overcome," Mr. Young said.

By Dr. Musa Keilani

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

الصحف الجريدة الأردنية المستقلة المنشورة بالإنجليزية من قبل المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. تأسست 1975.

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

History made again

THE WHITE House was the scene Thursday of yet another historic peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Two years earlier the first handshake between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat at the same place brought with it the first accord ever between the two warring peoples as represented in the Declaration of Principles that was to govern their future talks. This time, there was a broad agreement on the implementation of the second stage of the accord spelling out an expanded Palestinian control over West Bank cities and towns.

The ceremony, which was presided over by President Bill Clinton, was witnessed by key regional and world leaders whose presence signalled a broad international support for the Mideast peace process. It was no accident therefore that the agreement was also signed and witnessed by Mr. Clinton, His Majesty King Hussein, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and last but not least Norwegian Foreign Minister Bjørn Gode, whose capital city Oslo hosted the breakthrough between the PLO and Israel two years ago.

The latest accord may have indeed brought closer the day when "the clash of arms will be banished from God's holy land," as the U.S. president remarked on the occasion, or brought nearer the poet's dream as the Israeli prime minister poignantly observed, or has demonstrated that the reconciliation effort has become irreversible as Chairman Arafat rightly pointed out. Still, the biggest challenge to all that has been painstakingly achieved is what King Hussein described in his remarks at the ceremony as the real challenge to the remaining leaders in the Middle East "to demonstrate courage, both moral and physical, to show what responsibility means by joining the peace camp." No doubt His Majesty had Syrian President Hafez Al Assad uppermost on his mind when he called on the other parties in the region to join the campaign for peace.

Indeed King Hussein was not alone in alluding to the unfinished business in the region. Mr. Clinton expressed the hope that Damascus and Beirut would soon make their presence and role more visible. President Mubarak was equally emphatic when he said that the mission of building peace cannot be fulfilled until similar progress is attained on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. So were Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin. As a matter of fact the entire international community is unanimous on the urgent need for a comprehensive settlement.

The feat that was accomplished Thursday just like all the other successes on the peace front will remain spoiled and forever incomplete unless and until Syria and Lebanon have firmly joined in. This indispensable role cannot be expected to be realised on a unilateral basis, however. Much more is still expected from Israel in order to bring Damascus on board. But this does not make the challenge to the Syrian leadership any easier. The Syrians can still undertake bolder moves towards the goal of sealing lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

MAHMOUD RIMAWI, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, has urged Iraq to follow France's advice and accept U.N. Security Council resolution 986 on the sale of limited amounts of oil under U.N. supervision for the purchase of food and medicine. The writer said that the majority of Iraqis are nearing starvation as a result of the sanctions. By selling oil, Iraq will be partially relieved and its isolation from the rest of the world will begin to end. But what is more important, is that the oil revenue will rescue the lives of the innocent people, he said. The writer said that the Iraqi government had been subjected to much humiliation through the series of U.N. resolutions and sanctions that have effectively encroached on and its sovereignty and thus the argument that the provisions of U.N. deal should be rejected for sovereignty concerns is invalid.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour urged the concerned authorities to be brave enough and enforce the law on those who continually contaminate water, soil and air and pollute the environment. Mohammad Daoud said that a recent report by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation has revealed that 80 per cent of the factories in Jordan have failed to abide by the regulations concerning the treatment of the wastewater emerging from their installations. With total disregard to the rules concerning measures to safeguard the environment, these factories have been causing direct danger to the public, said the writer. It is true that these factories are producing commodities that are badly needed by the local communities, but this is no justification for their continued mal-practices, he added. If the concerned authorities cannot close these factories, then the least they can do is to impose heavy financial penalties on them and use the revenue to deal with the consequences of the pollution, suggested the writer.

Jordanian Perspective

A first step towards Palestinian statehood

THE AGREEMENT that Israeli and Palestinian leaders signed in Washington on Thursday on the finer details of interim self-rule in the West Bank has clearly established that the Arab-Israeli peace process is irreversible. The agreement also confounded assumptions among the hardliners on the Arab side that the 1993 declaration of principles (DoP) signed by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel was an Israeli ploy to end the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories.

For all practical and technical purposes, the accord that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed on Thursday is the first step towards Palestinian statehood. But it is indeed an arduous way that lies ahead. Extremists on both sides are bent upon wrecking the entire process, as we see from the reactions from the Israeli right-wing and the Damascus-based Palestinian groups to the self-rule agreement. The other side of the coin is the commitment that both Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat have displayed by pressing ahead with the negotiations despite the spasms of violence and not letting the hardliners have their way.

Indeed, the declaration of principles is one year behind schedule, but then it would have been naive on anyone's part to have expected an easy process of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, given the complexity of the issues before them.

For us in Jordan, the signing ceremony in Washington had an additional significance: It substantiated Jordan's argument that the Kingdom, by virtue of its own peace treaty with Israel, is in a much better position to positively

influence the course of the peace process. Upon Mr. Arafat's request, His Majesty King Hussein intervened with Mr. Rabin whenever the going got too tough for the Palestinians in the negotiations, particularly over the status of Hebron. To a large extent, it was the behind-the-scenes Jordanian intervention that saved the day since Mr. Rabin understood the Palestinian concerns better when they were put to him by King Hussein. For once, we also think, Mr. Arafat realised the key role Jordan played and would continue to play in the peace process. At least that is the message we got from his visit to Jordan the day after the initialing of the Taba accord and his public expressions of appreciation for the Jordanian role.

Definitely we would have liked to see Israel relinquishing its control over Hebron just as all West Bank towns, but it was not a straightforward cut and deal question. Much difficult as it is acknowledge, the fact remains that the 450 or so settlers in the heart of Hebron are a problem for Mr. Rabin as much as it is for Mr. Arafat. And the Israeli prime minister has made no secret of his view that it is absurd to have thousands of Israeli soldiers to protect the 450, who live among 120,000 Palestinians. It is, of course, clear that Mr. Rabin understands that the settlers have to leave Hebron. It is only a matter of methods and means to ensure their peaceful departure from the town.

Barring the sore point over Hebron, it is unlikely that the self-rule agreement could have been any different from the way it was formulated in the last 16 months and signed in Washington on Thursday.

The next step is its implementation. While we congratulate

late our Palestinian brethren for having achieved the deal, we cannot but raise some concerns. For one thing, the first reflection of the agreement should be a qualitative change in the lives of the Palestinians living in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. That is where the international community has to step in with a firm commitment to help Mr. Arafat prove to the sceptics that the course he opted for was the best indeed. In this context, it was heartening to note President Clinton and other leaders gathered in Washington on Thursday issue a joint declaration pledging help for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). We hope the pledge would not remain simply a piece of paper. The snags in the delivery of assistance to the PNA should be removed once and for all. Let us not forget that the PNA is assuming responsibilities of running the lives of another two million people in the West Bank and any failure on its part to deliver the promises of a better life to the Palestinians would not bode well for the positive continuation of the peace process.

At the same time, it is not simply enough for the PNA to concern itself with administering self-rule. It has to ensure democracy, political pluralism and respect for human rights in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Again, the Palestinians have a fine example to follow just across the river — Jordan, which has adopted these key features of a civilised society as a way of life for itself. We stand ready to extend whatever help we could to the Palestinians, but it is essentially for the PNA to convince itself that democracy, with all that it entails, is the best way of life everyone around.



Identity and polarisation in Jordanian society

By Laurie Brand

IDENTITY IS a complex and ever-evolving phenomenon. Each one of us counts numerous aspects or constituent parts to our individual identities: profession, sex, religion, ethnicity, nationality, and so on. For any given person, the most important constituent part of his/her identity may shift or change over time, depending upon developments at home, at the office, in the economy, or on the political front. The challenge to the student of identity is to understand what factors lead to the emergence of one factor or set of factors as the primary determinants of a person's sense of identity at a particular point in time.

Over the past few years Jordanian society has experienced a number of serious economic and political developments. The beginning of political liberalisation in 1989, the second Gulf war and its fallout, economic crisis and policies aimed at reducing the role of the state, the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli peace accord followed by the Jordanian-Israeli accord — all have had a deep and, in some cases, disorienting impact. Given the tremendous changes and challenges involved, it could not easily have been otherwise. Such momentous developments and the uncertain future they portend create anxieties and fears. Strong emotions of this type are often expressed in the form of dissatisfaction or anger with an identifiable "other" in society.

Who and along what lines this "Other" is constructed will vary from society to society, but there is little question that in Jordan the dividing line is most often drawn between citizens of Palestinian origin and East Bank Jordanians. While scholarship on Jordan has greatly increased in the last few years, to date, no study has been published exploring the development of the sense of Jordanian identity over the years, nor of the development of the tensions that exist between the two groups in the Kingdom. It is for that reason that the study recently published by Jordan University's Centre for Strategic Studies is so timely and important. A field survey, which was the first part of the project, documents the existence of these tensions and the reasons expressed on both sides for them. For those who have long felt, or felt victim of, such tensions, the results will not be surprising. But that was not the point of the study. The goal of the study was to provide sound field research — as opposed to continuing speculation or polemic — to underpin both future studies of the problem and to open the door for suggestions of potential solutions.

The existence of two (or more) communal groups in a country need not be a source of weakness. While one may point to a number

of obvious cases today where communal tensions have led to armed conflict, there are many, many other countries in which differences, grievances and competition among or between groups are carefully managed so that disintegration need not result. Indeed, admission of the existence of a problem is the first step to a solution. Ignoring, repressing or denying such a situation is more likely than not to lay the basis for a future growth in tensions and for potentially much more serious problems.

Academics and policy-makers of a variety of backgrounds — history, economics, sociology, political science — have skills that can be brought to bear both in understanding the development of the inter-communal problem and in formulating appropriate policy responses.

It has only been since the beginning of the political liberalisation in 1989 that the issue of inter-communal tensions has begun to be broached publicly, specifically in the local press. Whether such tensions have actually increased in recent years, or whether the relatively greater freedom of expression allow in the Kingdom has simply allowed them to be voiced more openly, is a question that needs further exploration. However, denying the existence of these tensions, or attempting to discredit the centre's study based on selective, out-of-context readings of certain parts of the 20-page summary of historical background and discussions that took place at a retreat at the Dead Sea, serves no larger national interest.

Academics and policy-makers of a variety of backgrounds — history, economics, sociology, political science — have skills that can be brought to bear both in understanding the development of the inter-communal problem and in formulating appropriate policy responses. The centre's study is a most welcome, dispassionate (yet concerned) opening statement in what anyone who cares about a healthy and stable future for the Kingdom must hope will be a continuing exchange and debate.

The writer is associate professor of international relations at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. She is the author of "Jordan's Inter-Arab Relations: The Political Economy of Alliance Making" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995) and "Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution Building and the Search for State" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). She is on academic sabbatical in Jordan on a Social Science Research Council grant. She contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Oslo II opens a new promising but equally difficult chapter in Mideast

By Elia Nasrallah

JORDANIAN DAILIES last week gave prominence to the conclusion of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement on expanding the Palestinian self-rule areas as well as Libya's continued expulsion of Palestinians and a host of local topics.

Hailing the Palestine-Israeli agreement, which was signed in Washington Thursday, Al Ra'i daily said that a new chapter in the Palestine-Israeli peace has been opened. The paper expressed the Arab people's hope that the agreement will pave the way for the restoration of all the Palestinian people's rights and the emergence of the independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. The paper said that it is also hoped that the agreement would lead to the achievement of a comprehensive peace on all the Israeli-Arab tracks.

Writing in Al Ra'i under the title of "Arafat's success," columnist Fahed Al Fanek said that the agreement on expanding the self-rule areas proved that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was right from the start and he has frustrated his opponents who had believed that the self-rule areas would not expand beyond Gaza and Jericho.

The writer said that Mr. Arafat faced Israeli provocations and obstacles with perseverance and proved that he is not subject to Israel's whims and desires but an independent leader who pursues his drive to serve his people. Mr. Arafat's hard bargaining led Israel to hand over seven Arab cities and hundreds of villages in the second phase of the Oslo deal and secured Israel's pledge to release all the Palestinian detainees, albeit in stages, said the writer.

For its part, Al Sabee weekly attacked the Palestine-Israeli agreement as another stage in Palestinian leaders' capitulation. The agreement allowed 400 Jewish thieves to remain in Hebron, failed to secure the release of all prisoners and left electricity and water supplies as well as overall security matters in the hand of Israel, said the weekly.

During the marathon negotiations, Mr. Arafat walked out of the meeting, accusing Israel of treating the Palestinian negotiators as slaves, and this means that the whole deal was tailored only to serve the Jewish state's objectives and protect its interests, said the paper.

Mahmoud Rimawi, a columnist in Al Ra'i, said that the agreement between the Palestinians and Israel could not have been realised had the Palestinian leadership not been perseverant and patient enough in the face of Israel's procrastinations and adamant stands. The writer said that Israel has repeatedly tried to delay the second phase of the Oslo deal and its negotiators repeatedly blocked the path of agreement at a time when the Jewish state continued its drive to confiscate more Arab lands and expand the Jewish settlements to cause frustration in the hearts of the Palestinians. With the signing of the agreement in Washington, he added, the road is paved for the Palestinian leadership to tackle the issues and the Jerusalem elections so as to establish Palestinian sovereignty on Palestinian lands.

We must admit that the Taba agreement does not embody all the Palestinian aspirations but it is rather a new step to enable the Palestinians to regain control over their land, said Mohammad Kawash, a writer in Al Dustour. With every achievement by the Palestinian leadership in Palestine, the credibility of Mr. Arafat's opponents decline further, said the writer. Of course, the presence of Palestinian opposition is necessary now and when the Palestinian state has been created because it serves as an incentive for the Palestinian leaders to double their efforts and attain more gains for the Palestinian people, he added. What is expected now is even more efforts and more pressure on Israel to force it to abide by the Oslo agreement and pave the way for the emergence of the independent Pales-

tinued state. Yasser Zaareh, a writer in Al Dustour, condemned the Taba accord as a clear concession on the part of the Palestinian leaders and a sell-out of many of the Palestinian people's rights. The writer said that the agreement did not secure the departure of Jewish settlers from the Arab town of Hebron, or the release of the Palestinian prisoners. Furthermore, the agreement has failed to establish the Palestinians' rights to their capital Jerusalem and offered Israel the right to move freely in and out of Palestinian towns and villages, said the writer. The whole Taba deal, he said, is a farce that by no means serves the Palestinian people's objectives.

In the view of Saleh Qalal, a writer in Al Dustour, the implementation of the Taba agreement will be much more difficult than the negotiations that led to it. We should not expect the Israelis to abide by the agreement, and sooner rather than later they would create new obstacles that would give them an excuse to remain in Arab lands, said the writer. Unless the Palestinians backed by the United States, to pressure Israel to carry out the agreement in full, the road to a settlement would be blocked and many of the Palestinian hopes would be dashed, he said.

A writer in Al Ra'i expressed apprehension that the presence of the Jewish settlers in the heart of Hebron would create a time bomb that could explode at any moment. Mufid Nableh said under the terms of the Taba accord, Israeli troops will continue to guard and protect the Jewish settlers but no one can guarantee the protection of the local Arab residents from settler attacks. Furthermore, the Israeli forces in the Arab city are expected to help the settlers to expand their presence and perpetuate their stay in the Arab town in a manner that would provoke further hostilities, which would serve as a spark for a renewal of acts of violence.

It is regrettable to see the Palestinian families being driven out of Libya at a time when they are hard pressed in their struggle to secure freedom from Israeli occupation and the restoration of their homeland, said Sultan Al Hattab in Al Ra'i daily. The writer said that by evicting the Palestinians from Libya, Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi is further aggravating the plight of the Palestinian people and complicating matters for their leaders to whom he should have extended support in their drive to create the Palestinian state.

By expelling Palestinians from Libya, Col. Qadhafi is trying to draw the world's attention to his own problems resulting from the U.N. sanctions clamped on Libya, said Mohammad Subeili, a writer in Al Dustour. He said that people who accuse Col. Qadhafi of being a lunatic are wrong and that they should understand that Col. Qadhafi is trying to put pressure on the United States and Israel to end the sanctions in exchange for cancelling the deportation order. The writer said that Col. Qadhafi is in a trap trying to find a way out of his predicament and has been under the illusion that the deportation of the Palestinians can do the trick in a dramatic way and help draw the world public's attention to his own problem.

In the view of Hamadeh Farasneh, a columnist in Al Dustour, Col. Qadhafi's order to expel Palestinians from Libya is not politically motivated as he claims it to be. The writer said that the expulsion came as a direct result of the economic, social and security problems facing the Libyan people resulting from the sanctions imposed by the United Nations on his country. The writer said that Col. Qadhafi is trying to direct the Libyan people's attention to an external "foe" and he believed that the expulsion of the Palestinians can take the Libyan people's mind off the internal problems.

A writer in Al Ra'i suggested that the government introduce amendments to the Penal Code in such a way that it would impose a fine on those who issue cheques that bounce.

Dollar tumbles despite Bank of Japan intervention

More than 1,000 government and business leaders from 60 nations are expected in Jordan next month pri-

"We are going to do an aggressive job of match-making" between U.S. and Middle Eastern governments and businesses before and during the Amman Economic Summit, said Richard Gannon, senior advisor for trade

In the first six months of this year, the Clinton administration provided successful advocacy on 62 transactions that helped U.S. exporters secure overseas agreements totalling \$12,600,000 million, including \$6,300,000 million

Jordan, for example, has a list of 27 projects that they have prepared with the assistance of the Canadian govern-

Explaining the homepage initiative, Mr. Gannon said

The focus of activity in Amman for the American business representatives will be at the Business Centre which will be housed in the same hotel where the U.S. official delegation will be staying, reportedly the Marriott.

Japan's Prime Minister Tomilchi Murayama told parliament he would do his best

Sales of dollars to buy marks helped push the dollar lower, along with selling by U.S. funds to buy yen. Japanese exporters also bought the Japanese currency to book their overseas earnings on the last business day of the fiscal half-year.

It says that if the government is to achieve its aim of limiting the deficit to four per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1996 and three per cent in 1997, to meet the criteria for monetary union laid down by the Maastricht

The OECD says that cuts should be made in the public sector, arguing that the proportion of public sector employees in France (23 per cent) was much higher in France than in Germany or the United States in 1980 (15 per cent) and that some activities could be rationalised.

"It is now known that the project is technically feasible and that the pipeline can be constructed and operated safely," Allen Ginnard of U.S. engineers J.P. Kenny International Inc. told delegates at a gas conference in the UAE capital Abu Dhabi.

Both governments remain in talks on exporting Omani gas to India by special tankers as well as by pipeline.

However, the consultants told over 330 participants in the 21st annual conference of the Inter-Arab Cambodian Association that opened in Amman on Friday that the

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Mike Argison

	32 Little bit	44 Insensible state	53 Stage villain
1 DOWN	33 inscribe	48 Gray	54 Tedious
1 Anthracite	35 Provo's state	50 Losa	56 Mongolian
2 Predicament	39 Flowers	effectiveness	desert
3 Gull of the Black Sea	41 Maui neighbor	51 Lamb	57 Vingt—
	42 Medium	52 "The Swedish	58 Appraise
4 Earnest request	43 Sound systems	Nightingale"	81 Child

Thursday's puzzle solved

A	L	M	S	I	'	S	L	A	M	S	T	E	M
Y	O	O	L	N	O	O	S	E	R	I	M	E	
O	S	I	L	O	T	A	R	T	S	I	N	C	A
P	E	E	W	E	E	R	E	I	S	E	Y	E	
			E	G	G		R	E	C	E	O	E	S
O	I	S	R	A	E	L	I	O	'	O	R	A	
I	'	S	M		O	R	O	N	E		N	O	N
E	L	A	M		S	L	A	N	G		S	C	I
M	E	L	E		A	N	N	A	S		E	I	R
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D	O	W	N	E	R	S		P	O	P			
O	R	O		L	I	T	T	L	E	W	O	M	E
O	E	R	N		S	I	R	'	E	O	N	U	O
G	A	L	A		E	L	E	N	A		Y	S	E
E	D	O	Y		S	T	E	A	L		M	E	N

Peanuts

Andy Cap

Mutt'n'Jeff

U BEAT
ALWAYS
ENDING!

BUT WHY DOES HE ALWAYS
PRETEND WITH MY
DOUGH? HEY,
MUTT!

**Birthstone of September:
Sapphire — Iapis Lazuli**

business daily beat A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Ministry determined not to float sanitary paper prices

THE MINISTRY of Supply and the Consumer Protection Society have agreed that prices of second grade sanitary paper should not be raised in any form and under any circumstance.

Acting Supply Minister Abdul Majid Al Azzam asserted: "We are against floating prices with regard to sanitary paper. It is not possible to float the prices of second grade sanitary paper because the majority of people who use it are from limited income groups." Dr. Azzam said that the ministry would announce a decision on this matter during the week and that the decision would be fair to all parties.

"Of course there will be no floating of prices because we are absolutely against this principle," he emphasised.

Mohammad Obeidat, head of the Consumer Protection Society, backed the ministry's stand and noted that the ministry's experience in floating the prices of coffee, ghee and Nido Milk powder in the past was negative. Dr. Obeidat said the demands of the companies to amend the prices of second grade sanitary paper were somewhat justified but that does not mean floating the prices because the costs of raw material inputs in the manufacturing of sanitary paper had increased only slightly. He added that despite this, the conclusions of a study jointly undertaken by the ministry and the society point out that companies manufacturing sanitary paper are still making more than 13.5 per cent profit.

He suggested opening the doors to import all kinds of sanitary paper to guarantee the right of the consumer to choose from a number of alternatives. He pointed out that the local manufacturers have benefited many times, through various means, after 1989 having doubled their prices and reduced the weights of their products of sanitary paper. As such, he demanded that the Specifications and Standardisation Bureau put specifications for second grade sanitary paper fixing its weight and its qualities. Dr. Obeidat repeated that floating the prices cannot be tolerated as the purchasing power of the consumers was declining day by day due to the continued rise in prices and as the policy of floatation in general has proved unsuccessful due to the limited size of the Jordanian market.

Meanwhile, an official source at the ministry said that if the companies do not adhere to the new prices to be fixed this week, the ministry would resort to refunding the prices of the first grade of sanitary paper which are now allowed to float. Also, the official source said, the ministry would open the door for imports from neighbouring countries where the prices would be lower than the local products should its prices be floated or amended.

Abdul Majed Faouri, the owner of the plant which manufactures "Soft" products, said he would not respond to the new prices and, unless prices of second grade sanitary paper are floated, he would keep his plant closed with all employees on an unpaid leave.

"Let the government hire them (the workers). There is no solution except to float the prices," Mr. Faouri emphasised (Al Dustour + Al Rai).

THE MINISTRY of Industry and Trade will issue a decision in the next few days abolishing import licences needed for imports from Arab and foreign countries. The decision will exclude a limited number of the products which require prior approval from concerned departments. Those products would cover foodstuffs, medicine, security-related equipment and materials as well as items to be imported within the framework of trade protocols signed with other countries (Al Rai).

Brokers expect AFM trading, prices to continue upward trend

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prices shot up by nearly three per cent at the Amman stock exchange this week, with weekly turnover rising by more than one-third, against expectations of an economic boom with the convening of a major regional conference in Amman next month, brokers said Thursday.

They said public state-

ments over the last few weeks by senior American officials and visits to Jordan by several U.S. investment groups had given rise to high hopes that American firms were poised to enter concrete joint ventures and come in with investments to the Kingdom.

The expectations were coupled with the passage of amendments to income and sales tax laws as well as a new investment promotion law that are seen key to attracting

foreign capital to the country with high incentives and tax holidays.

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM), as the Jordanian stock exchange is officially known, said turnover for the week ending Thursday was 9.4 million dinars, up 36.2 per cent from the previous week's 6.9 million dinars.

The report said 5.4 million shares changed hands during the week under 5,104 con-

tracts.

The official AFM index based on 60 major companies closed for the week at 159.7 points after gaining 4.2 points or 2.7 per cent. AFM dealers said the actual rise was close to four per cent, given that many companies which gained during the week are not included in the index.

Separate sectoral indices showed that banks gained by 4.6 per cent, services sector shares by two per cent, insur-

ance by 0.6 per cent and industrials by 0.3 per cent.

AFM brokers, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with market guidelines, said a recent decision by the Central Bank of Jordan to ease restrictions on commercial banks' lending in foreign currency was one of the major factors that shot up bank stocks in the market.

The AFM report said commercial banks and financial institutions accounted for

4.49 million dinars of the weekly turnover. Industrials came second with 2.57 million dinars, followed by services sector shares with a volume of 2.15 million dinars and insurance stocks with 170,000 dinars.

The week saw stocks of 95 companies changing hands. As trading closed for the week, 39 of them had gained, 36 slipped and 20 remained unchanged.

Brokers said they ex-

pected the upward trend to continue in the market in the run-up to the Oct. 29-31 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit in Amman. Jordan is expected to present projects worth \$3.5 billion at the summit seeking financing, and indications have emerged that the governments of Japan, the U.S. and several European countries are encouraging their private sectors to invest in Jordan.

Bankers discuss derivatives

(Continued from page 8)

from dealing with them and a strongly regulated sector, with a history marred by bank failures and large indebtedness.

"I think regulation will be curbing the use and volume of derivatives... banks are more risk averse, and past bank failures in part raise fears," said Charles Fargo, trader at the Bahrain-based Gulf International Bank.

Islam, the region's predominant religion which bans any form of interest, is also a potential constraint on derivatives growth, especially in conservative Saudi Arabia, bankers said.

They cite a recent Islamic law court ruling in the United Arab Emirates against derivatives trading, and a number of countries that have freer foreign exchange rules like Oman but strictly control its use.

"Derivatives are instruments that are especially based on interest and Islamic banks do not deal with any kind of interest," said Darwish Mahmoud, controller in the foreign investments department of Jordan Islamic Bank.

Bankers said while cash surplus Gulf banks were more advanced in the use of derivatives than other institutions in the region, aided partly by a strong foreign bank presence, trading posed higher risks at present in the Arab World.

"The danger is that derivatives operations are long term and due to fluctuation of interest rates it poses much higher risk than spot dealings and straight money market transactions," said Rafik Ammoun, president of the Forex Club in Lebanon.

Few bankers were able to put a figure on the volume of derivatives trading in the region, or its share of the trillion dollar global market in the new financial instruments.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARFANAT				
TELEPHONE: 807171 / 607179				
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (22/09/1995 - 27/09/1995)				
WEEKLY REPORT				
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLC	3,235,250	228.500	338.900	242.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	85,985	4.480	4.480	4.530
BANK OF JORDAN	14,369	1.470	1.470	1.500
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	86,839	1.200	1.300	1.250
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	30,568	2.430	2.430	2.480
THE HOUSING BANK	208,777	3.500	3.500	3.500
JORDAN EXIMAT BANK	21,400	2.740	2.740	2.770
JORDAN GULF BANK	1,494,149	1.430	1.430	1.450
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	38,324	3.750	3.750	3.740
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	45,327	1.730	1.730	1.750
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	10,082	3.850	3.850	3.800
SHARFANAT BANK	77,803	3.650	3.650	3.640
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	824,881	3.830	3.830	3.780
SWIT ELAL SAVING INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	4,035	3.240	3.240	3.270
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	257,997	0.920	0.920	0.950
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	2,359	5.300	5.300	5.240
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	124,143	1.950	1.950	1.970
BANKS SECTOR	4485935			
JORDAN INSURANCE	49,322	3.300	3.300	3.300
JERUSALEM INSURANCE	82,000	4.100	4.100	4.100
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	32,883	3.700	2.700	2.700
YAMOUK INSURANCE & REINSURANCE	1,220	3.050	3.050	3.050
MOLY LAND INSURANCE	2,465	2.640	2.640	2.600
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	484	2.450	2.450	2.420
INSURANCE SECTOR	148267			
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	292,887	1.440	1.440	1.470
JERUSALEM DISTRICT ELECTRICITY	710	3.140	3.140	3.210
JORDAN HIGH MINERAL	250	2.500	2.500	2.500
VEHICLES OWNERS FEDERATION	518,351	7.050	7.050	7.050
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	80,393	5.600	5.400	6.000
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINE	7,651	3.710	2.710	2.700
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	99,877	2.020	2.020	2.070
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	109,426	1.080	1.080	1.100
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	16,052	1.300	1.300	1.200
JORDAN PRICES FOUNDATION / ALMAA	8,340	9.050	9.850	9.760
JORDAN PRICES & PUBLISHING / AD-DUSTOUR	44,690	7.400	7.400	7.500
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODITY TRADING	143,512	3.300	3.300	2.400
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	137,312	3.130	3.130	3.120
SARAA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	48,313	1.340	1.240	1.330
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CO.-	222,288	1.170	1.170	1.100
SERVICES SECTOR	1750951			
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	4,517	21.760	21.760	19.500
ATTARKEP COAST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	7,406	1.230	1.230	1.200
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	97,675	2.640	3.640	3.620
JORDAN PROSPECT MINES	25,365	3.010	3.010	3.000
THE ARAB POTASH	15,277	4.910	4.910	4.930
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	72,260	9.470	9.470	9.420
MOOLIN INDUSTRIES	8,887	1.400	1.400	1.400
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	13,370	3.200	3.200	3.240
THE JORDAN WOOLLEN MILLS	19,740	7.350	7.350	7.400
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	97,129	4.990	4.990	4.930
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	30,013	5.970	5.970	5.980
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	2,749	2.500	2.500	2.500
JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES	3,550	3.050	3.050	3.000
THE PUBLIC MINING	1,927	3.000	3.000	2.930
SPINNING & WEAVING	434	1.850	1.850	1.920
RAPIA INDUSTRIES	4,560	3.300	3.200	2.280
BAN AL DANA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	37,106	7.400	7.400	7.400
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRY	10,136	5.370	5.370	5.300
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	348,494	0.450	0.650	0.640
GENERAL INVESTMENT	10,470	2.600	2.600	2.500
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	107,309	1.430	1.430	1.420
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	444	2.300	2.300	2.250
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	75,745	1.070	1.070	1.090
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	6,237	1.880	1.880	1.800
JORDAN ROCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	11,070	1.110	1.110	1.100
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	4,218	3.350	3.350	3.270
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	1,770	4.300	4.300	4.200
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	16,591	1.400	1.400	1.450
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	3,971	2.130	2.130	2.130
KANTHER INVESTMENT	2,041	1.720	1.730	1.470
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	42,709	3.170	3.170	3.190
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	71,175	2.000	2.000	2.000
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	28,444	1.670	1.670	1.640
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	221,212	1.400	1.400	1.410
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRIES	447,189	2.020	2.030	2.020
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	1074484			
GRAND TOTAL	8781344			
PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (23/09/1995 - 27/09/1995)				
WEEKLY REPORT				
COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
CENTRAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE	4,384	0.770	0.770	0.780
JORDAN TRADE FACILITIES	121,275	0.780	0.780	0.780
UNIFIED CO. FOR ORGANISING LAND TRANS.	41,303	2.230	2.230	2.200
ARAB FIN INV. CO.	120,607	1.070	1.070	1.110
UNION INVESTMENT CORP. 50%	99,752	0.940	0.940	0.940
ARAB FOOD & MEDICAL APPLIANCES	9,098	0.930	0.930	0.910
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	2,038	0.720	0.720	0.750
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JINCO	14,371	0.540	0.540	0.550
NATIONAL CHLORINE INDUSTRIES CO. LTD	14,452	1.730	1.730	1.730
NATIONAL TEXTILE & PLASTICS IND. CO.	115,150	1.050	1.050	1.080
RAYKAX DYES & WOLVES	2,205	0.900	0.900	0.870
EL-SAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	36,773	2.160	2.160	2.200
UNIVERSAL METALS	1,453	1.350	1.350	1.280
RED FRANKA	7,482	0.860	0.860	0.880
JORDAN STEEL	278,212	0.890	0.890	1.040
ARAB ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES	5,202	0.800	0.800	0.810
UNION TOBACCO	14,845	1.630	1.630	1.620
RAFI PHARMACEUTICALS	7,454	0.850	0.850	0.870
INDUSTRIES ENGINEERING	13,450	0.780	0.780	0.780
INDUSTRIAL CHEMIST	16,828	1.180	1.180	1.200
PEARL SANITARY PAPER CONVERTING	30,095	0.900	0.900	0.900
NATIONAL POULTRY 50%	24,627	0.880	0.880	0.880
GRAND TOTAL	1096536			

ROSCOPE

AST FOR SEPTEMBER 1995

March 21 to April 1995

April 20 to May 1995

May 20 to June 1995

June 20 to July 1995

July 20 to August 1995

August 20 to September 1995

September 20 to October 1995

October 20 to November 1995

November 20 to December 1995

December 20 to January 1996

January 20 to February 1996

February 20 to March 1996

March 20 to April 1996

April 20 to May 1996

May 20 to June 1996

June 20 to July 1996

July 20 to August 1996

August 20 to September 1996

September 20 to October 1996

October 20 to November 1996

November 20 to December 1996

December 20 to January 1997

January 20 to February 1997

February 20 to March 1997

Financial Markets		
In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank		
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 22/9/1995		
Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7188	0.7128
Sterling Pound	1.1174	1.1238
Deutsche Mark	0.4911	0.5006
Swiss Franc	0.6156	0.6167
French Franc	0.1447	0.1454
Japanese Yen	0.7082	0.7117
Dutch Guilder	0.4448	0.4470
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000
Italian Lira	0.0443	0.0445
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000
For All Other Currencies		
Currency	Bid	Offer
Official Dollar	1.1679	1.1608
Lebanese Lira	0.043139	0.044504
Saudi Riyal	0.1899	0.1900
Kuwaiti Dinar	5.5050	2.5650
Qatari Riyal	0.1934	0.1950
Egyptian Pound	0.2008	0.2160
Omani Riyal	1.1840	1.1870
UAE Dirham	0.1927	0.1934
Greek Drachma	0.0715	0.3115

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES		
Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.		
One U.S. dollar	1.3480/90	Canadian dollar
	1.4164/74	Deutsche marks
	1.5860/70	Dutch guilders
	1.1390/00	Swiss francs
	29.14/18	Belgian francs
	4.8929/79	French francs
	1609.81/3	Italian lire
	98.15/25	Japanese yen
	6.9050/50	Swedish crowns
	6.2420/70	Norwegian crowns
	5.5090/40	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1.5818/28	
One ounce of gold	\$383.9038/40	

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Salem wins event at horse show

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Amer Salem of Jordan won the first place in the marathon event closing the first day of the Sixth International Arabian horse show held at the Royal Stables.

Salem crossed the 43-kilometre race on "Ghazal" in 1 minute 34 seconds. Mohammad Ali Abu Skout came in second on "Golden Decans" clocking in 1:38. Ayman Benzo of Jordan won third place on "Slash-be" in 1:41.

The marathon competition started from Amra Castle and ended at the University farm. Only 21 of the 32 Jordanian horses which participated finished the race.

Abu Skout won the best jockey prize while Mazna Saleh, owner of "Hammam" collected JD 1,500 for "the best horse."

Earlier on Thursday, in the junior non-registered Arabian horses competition, Jordanian horses "Bushra" and "Tarek" won first and second places respectively.

In the senior non-registered Arabian horse, "Samarqand" owned by Iyad Shalan clinched first place while "Mahboubah Katrina" came in second.

Qatari horses, "Kamasia," "Imperial Glafita," and "Alia" collected the first three places in the junior females competition.

The senior female competition was won by "Wissamah," "Marbella" and "Imperial Amfania."

The junior males competition was also dominated by Qatari horses. "Ryan," "Bin Shahid" and "Shabin" collected the first three positions.

Jordanian and Qatari horses split positions in the senior males competition. Qatari "Kamal Batal" came in first place followed by Jordanian "Skidsly" and "Stam."

"Wassamah" and "Marbella" won the supreme female championship, while Jordanian horses "Kamal Batal" and "Skidsly" shined again in the supreme male competition.

Thursday and Friday's events were attended by Their Royal Highnesses Princess Alia and Zein, and other Royal family members, Qatari Ambassador to Jordan, Shuaib Al Kawi, president of Arab and Qatari Equestrian Federation.

The five-day event was organised by the Jordanian Arabian Horse Society, which is headed by Princess Alia.

One of the main aims of the Arabian horse show is to enable horsebreeders to qualify their Arabian horses to take part in international competition.

Moreover, the show aims at exposing Arab culture and demonstrating the endurance of Arabian horses.

FIFA welcomes agents' association

GENEVA (R) — The newly-formed International Association of Football Agents was welcomed on Friday by FIFA, soccer's world governing body.

FIFA Deputy General Secretary Michel Zen Ruffin told Reuters: "We welcome the founding of this new international association. The present situation must be changed."

"It is like a jungle. The renegades must be weeded out. There are too many litigations pending at the moment involving players' agents."

Belgian Lawyer Dirk Degraen told reporters one of the main reasons for forming the association was a new FIFA regulation forbidding agents to take any payment from clubs when they effect a transfer.

"This is unfair especially if a club asks an agent to look for a certain type of player," Degraen said.

"We would like the term football agents to be used instead of players' agents."

The association's first main meeting is set for Brussels on November 6.



Canadian cyclist Curt Harnett celebrates after his world record, breaking the 10-second barrier with a time of 9.865, was flashed on the scoreboard (Reuters photo)

Harnett breaks 200-m world record

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — Curt Harnett of Canada broke the world record in a qualifying race for the 200-metre time trial Thursday at the World Cycling Championships, the second world record to fall at the event.

Harnett finished in 9.865 seconds, one of three riders to break the 10-second barrier. In all, seven riders shattered the Russian cyclist Vladimir Adamchik's record of 10.099 seconds set in 1990.

"What we've done is fantastic," said Harnett after the race at Bogota's Luis Carlos Galan Velodrome. "This is a

record for the 21st century." Twenty-four riders qualified for the finals in the event, scheduled for Saturday.

On Tuesday, Australian Shane Kelly broke the record for the fastest kilometre, nearly becoming the first man to break the 1 minute barrier with a time of 1 minute 0.613 seconds.

The championships began Tuesday at the Velodrome. On Oct. 4 they move outside Bogota, to Colombia's eastern Cordillera Mountain range for road races.

South Korea sweep judo golds

CHIBA, Japan (AFP) — Chun Ki-Young, Cho Min-Sun and Chung Sung-Sook clinched three gold medals in a row for South Korea, putting their country on top of the table at the World Judo Championships on Friday.

Japan had to wait till the last event of the day for their first gold when Toshihiko Koga, Barcelona Olympic 71kg champion, won the 78kg class.

"The secret of our success is nothing but the fact that we practised hard. I trained hard and my hard work has paid off," said 23-year-old Cho, who was promised an annuity for retaining the women's middleweight title.

Cho used an inner thigh skipping throw to send Barcelona Olympic gold medalist Jimeenez Odelis Reve onto the mat one minute 39 seconds into the 66kg final, earning South Korea's first gold here.

Chun, the winner of the 78kg class at the 1993 championships in Hamilton, Canada,

followed Cho with a victory in the men's middleweight category.

The 22-year-old student swift-footed for major outer leaping to crush Hidehiko Yoshida, the host country's best hope in the men's event, repeating his Hamilton performance against the Barcelona Olympic 78kg champion.

In Hamilton, I was young and I never felt pressure, because it was my first appearance in the world championships. This time, my opponent in the final was the same. I just tried to do my best to beat him," said Chun.

"It was not my tactics to use o-soto-gari (major outer reaping) against him today, but it just occurred in my mind to try that technique when I watched him playing in video tape," he added.

Meanwhile, Yoshida said: "Although I was beaten, I'm not feeling so bad, because he beat me by a decisive ippon, not a decision. I have

no excuse that I was not in good condition coming into the championships."

South Korea, who won only two gold through Chun and Cho two years ago, added one more when Chung Sung-Sook crushed European champion Jenny Gal of the Netherlands to win the women's 61kg category.

The Korean attacked aggressively throughout the four-minute battle, gaining a yuko and going on to win the light middleweight title.

In the men's light middleweight final, Koga made no mistakes displaying his one arm shoulder throwing to put Oren Snadga of Israel down 2:48 into the bout.

"Physically, my opponents are taller and their arms are longer than those I played against in the 71kg class. It was difficult to cope with, but it's good experience for me aiming at next year (Atlanta Olympics)," said Koga.

France took two bronze medals through Catherine Fleury and Djamel Bouras, while Poland, Canada, Russia, Belgium, the United States and Austria took home the remaining six bronze.

On Thursday, David Douillet of France, Angeli-que Serise of the Netherlands, Diadenis Luna of Cuba and Pawel Nastula of Poland clinched the first four titles.



France's David Douillet punches the air as he takes the gold medal in the over-95 kilogramme category of the World Judo Championships in Chiba (Reuters photo)

Cantona punishment has not hurt his appeal

LONDON (AP) — Eric Cantona has served his punishment, but that hasn't hurt the commercial appeal of Manchester United's reckless French soccer genius.

About 200 billboards put up by an American sports shoe manufacturer are appearing across Britain reminding fans that Cantona makes his return this weekend after completing an eight-month ban for his infamous kung-fu-style kick on a spectator.

"He's paid for his mistakes," the posters read. "Now it's somebody else's turn."

The slogan is also adorning T-shirts on sale this week.

"We don't condone what he did, but it's been quite good for us and caused lots of attention," said Graham Childs, spokesman for Nike UK, which has Cantona under contract.

"I don't think it's hurt Nike," Childs added. "I don't think he (Cantona) is seen as an evil figure... He obviously caused a great public relations stir and we're glad to be on the back of that."

Cantona's return couldn't have been more perfectly orchestrated. He will start on Sunday at Old Trafford against archrivals Liverpool at a time when Manchester United isn't scoring many goals.

"He will definitely play," right from the start," said Manager Alex Ferguson. "I could have put him in the reserves for four or five games... but there would be a cry from the fans because they want to see him and there would be more media men at the game than supporters."

Ferguson said he's convinced Cantona has learned his lesson and Cantona, in a BBC Radio interview to be broadcast Saturday, says he's ready for a new start.

"What I have to do now is find a solution," he said. "That's what I think I have found now. Nobody knows about it and I can't explain it. People will have to notice it themselves. I play with passion and fire. I have to accept this fire sometimes does harm. I know it does harm... I don't have to justify myself. I have no regrets."

Cantona's absence was felt Tuesday when England's

most famous club was eliminated from the first round of the UEFA cup by Russian side Rotor Volgograd.

Cantona was branded a "madman" and "thug" when he hurled himself into the stands on Jan. 25 and kicked and punched a Crystal Palace fan who had been taunting him. The Frenchman had just been sent off for the fifth time in 15 months.

The incident was immediately termed "the 10 seconds that shook the English football world." But it only added to a career full of bizarre incidents. In France, he once punched the goalie on his own team.

The English Football Association and FIFA suspended Cantona until Oct. 1 for bringing the game into disrepute.

In addition, a judge initially sentenced Cantona to two weeks in jail for assault. The sentence was reduced on appeal to 120 hours of community service.

France stripped Cantona of the national team captaincy. Even English soccer observers — accustomed to hooligans and crowd violence — suggested this was too much and predicted his career was over.

Far from hurting him, the notoriety seems to have helped. He has been highly visible during the ban, appearing in television commercials and print ads.

Earlier this month in Paris, Cantona joined soccer's other bad boy — Diego Maradona — to announce the formation of a soccer players' union.

In April, he rejected a transfer to Inter Milan and signed a new three-year contract with Manchester United, reported to be far better than his last.

In August — unhappy with the terms of his suspension — he bolted home to France, threatening to break the contract. Ferguson — who says he's the best player he's ever had — rushed to Paris and convinced him to stay.

Cantona, who won the league title with Leeds in 1992, led United to back-to-back championships in 1993 and '94.

Without him for most of last season, Manchester United finished second in the Premier League and lost in



Eric Cantona

the FA Cup final.

"I think he (Cantona) is among the best five players ever in the world and to have him back is an extra bonus that will add to the confidence of the younger players," said United goalie Peter Schmeichel.

Sunday's match is expected to be a sell-out at Old Trafford, whose seating has been reduced to 30,000 this season because of renovations.



World champion Garry Kasparov of Russia ponders his next move during his match against challenger Viswanathan Anand of India in the eleventh game of the best-of-20 game Professional Chess Association World Championship match at the World Trade Centre in New York. Kasparov won the game after 31 moves (Reuters photo)

Jones to take on Whitaker in basketball

PENSACOLA, Florida (AP) — Roy Jones Jr. and Pernell Whitaker has each been described as the world's best pound-for-pound boxer.

On Dec. 9 at the Pensacola Civic Centre, they will take each other on — in basketball, not boxing.

The basketball game is sponsored by Home Box Office and the Pensacola News Journal. It is the first of a series of goodwill and charity events to be known as "reaching beyond the ring."

The announcement came as a prelude to Jones' International Boxing Federation (IBF) title defence Saturday at the civic centre against Tony Thornton.

Jones, the IBF super middleweight champion, said he hopes the basketball game will improve boxing's image.

"It's very important that we try to reach out and help as many people as we can while at the same time we can show that boxers are not such bad people," Jones said.

"People always think everybody's like Mike Tyson ... or everybody's like James Toney. Everybody isn't that way."

heavyweight champion, recently came back after completing a prison term in Indiana for rape. Toney trashed his house and threatened to shoot his manager over losing his title to Jones last year.

Whitaker, the WBC welterweight champion, and Jones are avid amateur basketball players. Each will recruit a team from his hometown: Jones from Pensacola and Whitaker from Norfolk, Virginia.

A 9-kilogramme weight difference prevents Whitaker, 66 kilogrammes, and Jones, 76 kilogrammes, from using their fists to settle the argument of who is the better boxer.

Jones' team will feature other Pensacola boxers, including IBF cruiserweight champion Al Cole, National Amateur Boxing Federation (NABF) featherweight champion Derrin "Smoke" Gainer and Billy "the kid" Lewis.

On the same card with Jones on Saturday, Lewis will fight Frank Rhodes of Cincinnati for the vacant USBA super middleweight championship and Gainer will defend his title against Roberto Villareal of Mexico.



Russia's Svetlana Samokhvalova holds her arms up after she won the women's points race at the World Cycling Championships Italy's Nada Cristofoli took the silver medal and France's Nathalie Lancien won the bronze (Reuters photo)

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NUT SHELL
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British Formula One driver Damon Hill wipes his helmet during a practice session of the European Grand Prix in Nuerburg (Reuters photo)



Third placed German Formula One driver Michael Schumacher checks his times on a screen during a pit stop at a practice session of the European Grand Prix in Nuerburg (Reuters photo)

Maradona impresses South Koreans

SEOUL (AFP) — Diego Maradona ends a 11-month doping ban in a match against South Korea here on Saturday — and the aging star is already making a good impression.

The local media, which has criticised the Argentine for his arrogance and erratic behaviour, is now full of praise for his dedication to football. "Despite all his arrogance and controversial behaviour, one thing about him is more than admirable, his sincere attitude in training," said Sports Seoul.

The daily noted during his week-long stay here, Maradona had not missed a single training session — despite breaking promises of public appearances and leaving fans, including children, in the lurch.

Boca Juniors team leader, Silvin Marzolini, said he would allow Maradona to play the full 90 minutes.

"Maradona is now in good shape. The comeback match will be a good game to go into the memory of football fans," he said.

"South Koreans are good at speed and power, but our team has an advantage in

skill," he said.

Maradona, 35, heavier and slower, will turn out for his old club in his first match since playing against Nigeria in the 1994 World Cup in the United States, where he was expelled for using the stimulant ephedrine.

It was Maradona's second drug ban after a 15-month ban for cocaine use while playing in the Italian League for Napoli.

He signed a two-year contract, worth \$8 million, for Boca Juniors in June after a deal to play for Pele's former club, Santos, fell through.

Maradona will join forces with his old-time partner and star striker, Claudio Caniggia in the match, to be televised live across South Korea.

Caniggia, 28, on loan for a year from Portugal's Benfica, was Maradona's partner in the 1990 Italian World Cup and the 1994 event.

Local football experts say speedy Caniggia could turn out to be more of a threat than Maradona for South Korea, whose offence will be led by star striker Koo Jung-Woon, picked as a world star in the 1994 World Cup.



Argentinian superstar Diego Maradona chases the ball during first practice with his team, the Boca Juniors in Seoul (Reuters photo)

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In UEFA Cup, big guns given easy draw

GENEVA, Switzerland (AFP) — UEFA Cup favourites AC Milan, Barcelona and Bayern Munich look set for an easy second round after drawing competition minnows here on Friday.

The Italian giants play French Inter Milan Cup qualifiers Strasbourg, who came through against Hungarians Ujpest, 5-0.

But Strasbourg's French international central defender Franck Leboeuf was undeterred: "It's great. They are exactly the kind of team we need to play if we are to have any ambition," he said.

Barcelona, 1994 European Cup finalists, appear to have shaken off the departures of 1994 World Cup finals star

striker Brazilian Romario and Bulgarian Stoitkov.

Their Bosnian striker Mehmed Kodro has scored three goals in four league games and alongside Portuguese star Luis Figo will prove a handful for Figo's countrymen of Vitoria Guimaraes, who qualified 3-1 against Belgians Standard Liege.

Bayern Munich, who have not dropped a point in the domestic league this season, play Scots side Raith Rovers, who scraped through 3-2 against Akrans of Iceland.

The British clubs face a mixed bag in the UEFA cup. Leeds United are set for an uphill struggle against former European champions Dutch side PSV Eindhoven, cur-

rently second in the domestic league, who crushed Finland's MyPa-47 8-2 in the first round.

Twice former European Cup winners Nottingham Forest play French club Auxerre, third in the domestic league and Liverpool play Bondy of Denmark.

Another French-Italian pitches last season's league runners-up Lyon against Lazio.

In the Cup Winners' Cup, Scottish Premier Division leaders Glasgow Celtic, easy winners in their first round tie against Georgians Dinamo Batumi, face a far stiffer task against French league leaders Paris Saint Germain.

The French side, European

Cup semi-finalists last season, may have lost leading scorer Panamanian Dely Valdres for two months but have welcomed back French international striker Patrice Loko after treatment for psychiatric problems.

The Scottish side, winners of the 1967 European Cup, will not be unhappy that they go to Paris for the first leg.

English Cup winners Everton, winners of the 1985 competition, like Leeds United in the UEFA Cup, face through Dutch opposition in Feyenoord.

The Liverpool club had some worrying moments against Icelandic part-timers Reykjavik in the first round whereas the Dutch club came

through 13-0 on aggregate.

Cup Winners' Cup holders Real Zaragoza face Belgian club Brugge at home in the first leg. Brugge were knocked out in the quarter-finals by Chelsea last season while Zaragoza then defeated the London club in the semi-finals.

The 1993 winners Parma face a seemingly easy tie against Swedish club Halmstad. The Swedes gained an impressive first round win against Bulgarians Lokomotiv Sofia and Parma's unpredictable form, their Italian Cup loss to Inverly Palermo for instance, suggests that Halmstad could produce an upset.

Deporтиво La Coruna, coached by former Liverpool

hero and Welsh coach John Toshack, have, like Parma, risen from the lower leagues in recent seasons and challenged the status quo of traditional trophy winners.

They must travel for the first leg to Turkish side Trabzonspor, six times Turkish champions.

Trabzonspor will have to cope with the striking skills of Brazilian World Cup star Bebeto, former Barcelona Spanish international forward Aitor Beguiristain and Russian Dimitri Radchenko.

Their narrow 3-2 aggregate victory over Lithuanians Zalgiris Vilnius in the first round does not suggest that Toshack's side will have too many problems.



Dutch Feyenoord Rotterdam striker Regi Blinker (centre) fights for the ball with Dag Liepaja (left) and Dag Liepaja (right) during an early action of the second leg Cup Winners' Cup match Feyenoord Rotterdam against Dag Liepaja from Latvia in Rotterdam, Sept. 28 (Reuters photo)



Paul Le Guin (centre) of Paris St-Germain fights for control of the ball against Ronald Wemans (left) and Knut Anders Fostervold of Molde of Norway during early action of their Cup Winners' Cup return leg match, Sept. 28 (Reuters photo)

Fabre mounts powerful Arc challenge to Lammtarra

PARIS (R) — French master trainer Andre Fabre mounts a typically powerful challenge in Sunday's Prix de L'Arc de Triomphe in an effort to foil all conquering English Derby winner Lammtarra.

Although Fabre's Irish Berby winner Winged Love had to be withdrawn on Thursday due to the deteriorating ground at Longchamp, Fabre will saddle three of the expected 16 runners for the one and a half mile (2.4 km) Autumn High-light.

Fabre's assault for the \$750,000 top prize is led by last year's winner Carnegie with both Freedom Cry and Swain holding reasonable claims.

But Lammtarra remains a solid 3-1 favourite to become the first horse since Mill Reef in 1971 to complete the Epsom Derby, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth diamond stakes and Arc treble.

Despite his inexperience and the fact he has never raced on soft ground, Lammtarra continues to head the betting with champion jockey Frankie Dettori optimistic he can capture his first Arc at his eighth attempt.

Carnegie, 4-1 second favourite to retain his crown, impressed when holding off Balanchine (6-1) by a short head in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe earlier this month.

Frenchman Thierry Jarnet, who has a remarkable record in the race, is on board. Jarnet has only had five Arc mounts in his career but he has won two of the last three runnings with Carnegie and Subotica in 1992. He also finished fourth in 1993 on Intrepid.

Fabre, three times an Arc winner, speaks highly of 7-1 chance Swain, well backed in London bookmakers' shops this week, while Irish champion stakes runner-up Freedom Cry (16-1) has been prepared for an autumn campaign.

Big race specialist Michael Kinane has the ride on Swain, a Deauville winner in the summer, while Frenchman Olivier Peslier will be aboard Freedom Cry.

Carnegie and Swain are both the property of top owner Sheikh Mohammed of Dubai whose godolphin empire is represented not only by Lammtarra but also by third favourite Balanchine, last year's Epsom Oaks and Irish Derby winner.

Walter Swinburn, who won the derby on Lammtarra, rides Balanchine, who has made a miraculous return to the big time following two life-threatening bouts of colic.

France have another top class entry in Carling (8-1), winner of the group one Prix Vermeille at Longchamp three weeks ago and a dual French classic winner.

Carling was sold last week to leading Japanese owner Tetsuya Yoshida and will race in his colours after a deal brokered by top French bloodstock agent Patrick Barbe, whose wife Corine trains the filly.

Pure Grain (12-1), trained in England by Michael Stoute, is another talented filly.

The two-day meeting starts on Saturday when English

raider Double Trigger, Ascot and Goodwood Cup winner,

hids for the group one Prix du Cadran en-route to a crack at

the Melbourne Cup in November.

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The Ministry of Water and Irrigation / The Jordan Valley Authority announces its intention to auction the lease of plots of land for tourism investment projects on the Eastern Shore of the Dead Sea / Suweimeh . Those who wish to participate in the auction are invited to contact the Ministry of Water and Irrigation / Jordan Valley Authority - The Department of Land and Rural Development as of September 30, 1995, to obtain a copy of the auction terms according to the following:

- Two plots of land, temporary numbers 1 & 2 basin 39 (Farshat Ain Ghazal). These lie directly on the sea shore to the north of the Dead Sea Spa Hotel. Area of each plot is about 64 dunums.
- The plots will be suitable for building hotels and/or tourist villages of four or five star standard.
- Last date for obtaining auction terms is fixed on Saturday, October 7th, 1995.
- A site group visit will be arranged for the bidders on Monday, October 9th, 1995.
- Offers shall be deposited in the bids box located at the Jordan Valley Authority / Department of Land and Rural Development no later than 2 p.m. on Monday October 25, 1995.
- The Jordan Valley Authority will advertise the availability of lease for the plots of land within the Suweimeh development area located to the east and west of the main road as soon as the studies are completed by the Engineering Consultant commissioned by the Jordan Valley Authority.
- All interested investors are invited to submit bids, including those who had previously submitted pre qualification statements.

Secretary General
Jordan Valley Authority
Eng. Hashim Ashboul

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SCHEME



The British Embassy's Chevening Scholarships Scheme provides funds for post-graduate study in the United Kingdom.

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Chevening Scholarships are normally awarded for Masters degrees, although they can be awarded for other courses. Candidates are encouraged to apply in humanities subjects and in applied sciences. Applications for medicine and dentistry will not be considered.

Scholars will be expected to make some contribution towards the cost of their studies.

Application forms are available from the British Embassy or the British Council in Amman from Sunday 1 October and the closing date for the receipt of completed applications is 15 November 1995.

BRITISH EMBASSY, AMMAN

Jordan's quest for better Arab relations aims at safeguarding pan-Arab interests - Rawabdeh

AMMAN (J.T.) — Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh has said Jordan's efforts to strengthen its relations with the other Arab countries are aimed at helping to safeguard the Arab Nation's interests.

"Unity of Arab ranks and meetings among Arab leaders are bound to help the nation to confront the challenges and attain the nation's aspirations," said Mr. Rawabdeh in a statement to the Qatari News Agency.

Mr. Rawabdeh said that "those who believe that Jordan's quest for inter-Arab reconciliation aims at achieving a specific interest for Jordan are wrong because the Kingdom believes that any pan-Arab meeting will serve all the Arab countries."

Mr. Rawabdeh said Jordan refuses to reply to hasty statements on the part of Arab officials and prefers to leave it to the Arab Nation to decide on matters pertaining to national interest.

He stressed that Jordan will remain committed to its principles and working quietly and persistently to safeguard pan-Arab interests.

Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah was quoted as saying on Wednesday that his country had not forgotten what he called Jordan's cooperation with Iraq during the Gulf crisis and dismissed as

"wrong and baseless," reports that a rapprochement between Kuwait and Jordan was imminent.

The Kuwaiti criticism of Jordan has soured moves to end their Gulf war-era rift and could complicate U.S. efforts to tighten Iraq's economic isolation, analysts and diplomats said in Kuwait.

The comments by Sheikh Saad reflect many Kuwaitis' lingering coolness towards Jordan but run counter to a recent U.S.-backed campaign to improve Kuwaiti-Jordanian ties, Reuters reported.

They also reflect differences among Kuwaitis about how quickly to mend ties with "pro-Iraq" Arab states five years after relations were damaged by Iraq's 1990 invasion, the diplomats said.

"I am very confused by what I have heard," said Abdul Mohsen Jamal, a member of the Kuwaiti parliament's foreign affairs committee.

"We have one government and it should speak with one voice," he said of Sheikh Saad's remarks about Jordan.

"It is understandable that Kuwaitis do not like Jordan but reconciliation is a pragmatic path that is worth looking at."

Sheikh Saad had ruled out any resumption of relations until Jordan did more to dis-

miss itself from what he called its shameful pro-Iraq stance during Baghdad's seven-month occupation.

Mr. Jamal said these comments were in contrast with Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah's repeated welcoming of the prospect of better ties with Amman.

Sheikh Sabah has said Kuwait is willing to discuss resuming oil supplies to Jordan to help reduce its reliance on Iraqi oil.

"The fact is that there is a split in public opinion about Jordan. The side which cares about the future wants better relations (with Jordan)," a Foreign Ministry official said.

"The other side does not want to forget the wrongs of the past."

Better ties between Jordan and Gulf states like Kuwait are a key part of U.S. efforts to wean Jordan away from economic reliance on Iraq and step up pressure within Iraq for President Saddam Hussein's downfall.

Any rift with Amman could crush the Iraqi economy, already reeling under five years of trade sanctions, because Jordan is Iraq's sole remaining economic link to the outside world.

A poll published in Al Watan newspaper last month showed Kuwaitis objecting to an improvement in ties by a margin of 51 per cent to 32

per cent, with 17 per cent without an opinion.

Relations were not cut after the war but Jordan's embassy in Kuwait remains closed and Kuwait's embassy in Amman is headed by a chargé d'affaires.

Diplomats said it was not immediately clear what effect Sheikh Saad's comments would have on continuing efforts to improve Jordan-Kuwait ties. Such efforts moved up a gear after Jordan gave asylum in August to two senior Iraqi defectors.

Sheikh Sabah met his Jordanian counterpart Abdul Karim Al Kabarti in Cairo two weeks ago in the first high-level contact between the two countries since the Gulf crisis.

Sheikh Sabah may meet Mr. Kabarti again in the next few days at the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York.

Diplomats noted Kuwait shortly send ambassadors to Mauritania and Algeria for the first time since the Gulf crisis. Both countries were seen sympathetic to Iraq during the crisis.

Kuwait-based diplomats say they expect American lobbying for a reconciliation between Kuwait and Jordan to continue, as part of a twin track effort by Washington to isolate Iraq and bring Gulf states into the Arab-Israeli peace process.



CELEBRATION: Palestinians tear down the wire fence put by the Israeli army around the Dheish camp in the West Bank as they celebrate the signing on Thursday of an agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation on expanding Palestinian self-rule to the West Bank (see page one) (AFP photo)

Israel said poised to unveil E. Jerusalem housing plan

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Leftist members of Jerusalem's city council on Thursday called on Israel to reconsider a plan to build a new Jewish neighbourhood in the Arab half of the city to avoid a crisis with Israel's Arab peace partners.

In a letter published in the Arabic-language Kol Al Arah newspaper, four members of the council said Housing Minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer intended to officially announce on Sunday plans to build the Har Homa neighbourhood in East Jerusalem.

The letter said the plan was sure to anger Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, King Hussein and U.S. President Bill Clinton.

"We suggest that before you announce your plans... to consult the people mentioned above and obtain their approval so the Israeli government does not have to repeat what happened with the previous land confiscation," the letter said.

Housing ministry officials were immediately available for comment.

Israel has said it was planning a housing project on land straddling the line between the occupied West Bank and south-east Jerusalem. Israel says part of the

land is owned by Jews and part was confiscated from Palestinians and owners on a hill called Jahal Ahu Ghuneim.

In May, Israel bowed to international pressure and froze an order to confiscate Palestinian-owned land in East Jerusalem intended for Jewish Housing and a police station.

Israel and the PLO signed a peace accord on Thursday in Washington expanding Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank. The two sides are scheduled to start discussing the final status of Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, by mid-1996.

PLO finances in better shape - Godal

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is in better financial shape than expected but donors must give more in order to bring its deficit under control, the Norwegian foreign minister said Thursday.

Bjorn Tore Godal made his comments before a meeting of the ad hoc liaison committee of countries helping to finance the transition to Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank.

He said the PLO's budget deficit for 1995 had "largely been covered" but noted there was still a 1996 shortfall of 75 million dollars.

"There is ground for optimism," Mr. Godal said. "I urge the donors to continue... (to) speed up the

implementation of their projects."

Saudi Arabia marked the signing of the Israeli-PLO peace accord in Washington with a \$100 million grant to help finance the transition.

The Saudi delegation here issued a statement saying it was following through with the funds it pledged in 1993 when the two sides initiated the agreement.

"The participation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on this occasion stems from its commitment to support the Palestinian people in their quest to regain their legitimate rights," said the statement.

Meanwhile, Jacques Santer, head of the European Commission, said Thursday he saw no need to create a

development bank for the Middle East, as Washington advocates.

Pointing out the urgent need to invest now, and the length time it takes to create such an entity, Mr. Santer argued that there were plenty of commercial banks and institutions capable of putting together the money to invest in the region.

So far, some \$650 million has been disbursed out of billion promised two years ago when Israelis and Palestinians concluded their first autonomy agreement.

That understanding was bolstered Thursday at the White House when the PLO and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat (see page 7).

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said the United States hoped to announce new aid for West Bank and Gaza, along with "a substantial pledge to the Holtz fund," named after the Norwegian minister who organised secret meetings between Israel and the PLO that paved the way for the 1993 agreement.

A joint statement issued following Thursday's signing ceremony pledged "full support" for a Middle East Development Bank.

The statement was endorsed by U.S. President Bill Clinton, King Hussein, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat (see page 7).

Manila Muslims petition UAE to free maid

MANILA (R) — More than 1,000 Muslims in the Philippines lodged a petition on Friday with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) embassy in Manila urging the release of condemned Filipina maid Sarah Balahagan.

Pendatun Disimhan, spokesman of the newly formed group called United Muslims for Sarah Balahagan's Freedom, told reporters the maid should be freed because she only sought to defend her honour.

Ms. Balahagan, whom Manila claims is 16 but who the UAE says is 27, was sentenced to death by a UAE court earlier this month for stabbing to death her Arab employer whom she accused of raping her. The court rejected her plea of self-defence.

"In purity of her human spirit, she was obliged to defend herself at the time the crime was committed against her will," Mr. Disimhan said. He said their group would hold daily prayer vigils in front of a mosque and before the emirates' embassy in Manila ahead of the first hearing on the appeal filed by Ms. Balahagan's lawyers against her death sentence.

The petition appealing for the maid's freedom was handed over to a UAE envoy and then a short rally was held by the group in front of the emirates' embassy.

The first hearing on Ms. Balahagan's appeal has been moved up to Oct. 9 from Oct. 30 so a decision can be reached quickly on the case, a senior emirates' judge said on Thursday.

Ms. Balahagan's chief lawyer, Mohammad Al Amin, has predicted the appeal process would last no longer than two months.

The case has provoked outrage among Filipinos, still angry over the hanging by Singapore of Filipina maid Flor Contemplacion.

Newspaper and magazine editorials in the UAE have criticised the uproar which erupted in the Philippines over the verdict and a UAE official said pressure from Manila could hamper Ms. Balahagan's efforts to win leniency.

Ms. Balahagan's parents are due to fly to the UAE with a joint affidavit from residents of her hometown to show she was born on March 3, 1979 to prove she is only 16. Her lawyer said her age would be a crucial factor in her bid to win her freedom.

The UAE says she is 27 based on documents Philippines officials say were forged by Manila racketeers.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prisoners escape from Aldeed's jail

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Twelve elders and religious leaders accused of "treason" escaped over the wall of a warlord's jail in south Mogadishu early Friday, making their way over the "green line" to safety in the north of the Somali capital, relatives reported. Five militiamen guarding the prison went missing at the same time, taking their automatic rifles with them. The escape from the prison, run by General Mohammad Farah Aideded, elected "interim president" of Somalia by his supporters last June, copied that of AFP correspondent Alai Musa Abdi, who climbed the wall on Wednesday with the complicity of guards after being held for three weeks, accused of "serious" but unspecified crimes against Gen. Aideded's "government." Families of the prisoners who reported their escape said they had been fed once a day and given lectures every afternoon by militia psychologists on respect for Gen. Aideded's "government." Aideded militiamen were reported to be combing south Mogadishu on Friday in search of the escapees. Aideded's men meanwhile transferred all political prisoners from the jail once used by the criminal investigation department of President Mohammad Siad Barre, who was overthrown in 1991, to the main prison in south Mogadishu. A provincial governor is also reported to have escaped from captivity in the inland town of Baidoa, which Gen. Aideded captured on Sept. 10 at the head of a 600-man column he led the 250 kilometres from Mogadishu.

3 beheaded for drugs in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH (AP) — An Afghan, a Pakistani and a Chadian convicted for drug trafficking were beheaded Friday in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, raising the number of executions so far this year to a record 181. Most of those beheaded were convicted drug smugglers from Asia and Africa. The capital punishment for drug crimes was prescribed in 1987 by the kingdom's theologians in an effort to curb a growing narcotics trade. Before 1987, the death penalty was given only to rapists and murderers in accordance with Islamic law. London-based Amnesty International has expressed grave concern over the beheadings, saying that the kingdom had set a new record for executions. According to statistics by the human rights group the 90 executions that were carried out in the first four months of this year exceed the annual total for recent years. Amnesty International recorded 53 last year, 88 in 1993 and 66 executions in 1992.

India bans latest Rushdie book

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The Indian authorities on Friday formally banned the import of the latest book by Indian-born writer Salman Rushdie, which is in the race for this year's prestigious Booker Prize. Customs officials announced a ban on "The Moon's Last Sign" but did not provide any explanation for the move. Mr. Rushdie has been living in hiding since 1989, when the Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a death warrant against him because of a previous book, "The Satanic Verses" which was deemed blasphemous. Officials said major book distributors and retailers across India had been informed of the ban on Mr. Rushdie's latest work. The book had already been boycotted in the western state of Maharashtra because a character bears an uncanny resemblance to marvellous Hindu politician Bal Thackeray. There have also been objections to a dog called Jawahar, the name of India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Israeli court rejects appeal for hijacker's release

BEERSHEBA (AFP) — A court turned down an appeal here Friday for the release of an Iranian who hijacked a plane in Israel and now wants to marry a Jewish girl and convert, legal officials said. The court in the southern town of Beersheba extended Jabari Rizah's custody until next Thursday, rejecting the appeal of a defence lawyer for his release pending charges. Mr. Rizah, a 30-year-old air steward, has asked for asylum and said he wants to convert to Judaism and marry a Jewish girl, since hijacking an Iranian Boeing 707 with more than 170 people on board to southern Israel on Sept. 9. "I love the Jewish people and I am asking not to be tried," he said at an earlier hearing. Israeli officials have said the asylum request would be rejected. He could be charged with hijacking, illegal possession of a gun, and illegal entry. But officials say Mr. Rizah is more likely to be turned over to the International Committee of the Red Cross. Iran, which has accused Israel of involvement in the hijacking, wants his extradition and has appealed to the International Civil Aviation Organisation for help.

English rugby star and wife separate

LONDON (R) — English rugby captain Will Carling, whose friendship with Princess Diana has grabbed newspaper headlines, and his wife have decided to spend time apart, a spokesman for the couple said. The 29-year-old sportsman and his new presenter wife Julia said they hoped the separation would be temporary and no third party was involved.

"Will Carling announced with regret tonight that he and his wife Julia have agreed to spend some time apart," Carling said in a statement issued by Colin Herdridge, the rugby union's media liaison officer.

"They both believe that they need space and some peace for the time being. They want to emphasise that nobody else is involved and they hope that by allowing themselves time apart to reflect, they will be able to get back together as soon as possible. They will issue no further statements."

The announcement of the temporary separation came less than a week after a Sunday newspaper reported a secret meeting between the sports star and the estranged wife of Prince Charles. The News of The World published pictures of a tearful Princess Diana emerging from an exclusive London sports club last Friday followed minutes later, by Carling, Buckingham Palace sources said the meeting was just coincidence. A palace spokeswoman had no comment to make about the separation. Carling has insisted that he and Princess Diana were just friends and has dismissed the rumours about their relationship. He claims his wife knew he planned to visit the sports clinic for treatment of a hip problem.

Takemura laughs off U.K. magazine 'award'

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura Friday laughed off a British magazine's award naming him the "worst finance minister of the year," saying he will become the best once Japan's economy recovers. "My evaluation became the worst in light of the poor state of the Japanese economy... but I expect to become the best one next year," Mr. Takemura told a routine news conference after a cabinet meeting. A British financial publication, Euromoney magazine, named Mr. Takemura as the recipient of the award for 1995 in its latest edition published Friday, citing his poor handling of the economy and a banking crisis as well as his failure to come up with convincing steps to pull Japan out of its long recession. The magazine also pointed out that Mr. Takemura had unsuccessfully tried to resign from his post. Japan's financial system has at least \$500 billion in problem loans, and a string of financial failures over the past year have undermined world confidence in Japan's banks.

MP calls for quarantine for gays

HARARE (R) — A member of Zimbabwe's ruling ZANU-PF party took up President Robert Mugabe's anti-gay line on, saying homosexuals should be placed in quarantine. "Like tuberculosis patients, they should be hibernated in an isolation hospital until they are treated," Member of Parliament Aeneas Chigwedere said during a debate on a motion backing Mr. Mugabe's stance. Another MP said anti-homosexual material should be taught in schools.

Coalition against 'normalisation' holds meeting, pledges to press its campaign

AMMAN (J.T.) — Opponents of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty on Friday intensified their campaign against the normalisation of ties with the Jewish state by holding a general conference which was attended by 330 representatives of political parties and other activists.

The conference, held at the premises of the Jordan People's Democratic Party (JPDP), was the product of 16 smaller meetings held in the Kingdom's governorates, five of them in Amman.

The conference's first secretary, Salem Nahhas of the JPDP, said in a welcoming address that the Jordanian people were being forced to relinquish their centuries-old heritage and principles by normalising ties with Israel and submitting to other principles.

"It was for the sake of these principles that you achieved what could not be achieved over a century of conflict with Zionism and Western imperialism," Mr. Nahhas said.

"You have achieved the unity of ranks of a coalition of Islamic, pan-Arabist and nationalist forces in a comprehensive opposition backed by all the people from north to south in confronting those relinquishing the principles of righteousness, justice, freedom and peace," he said, in reference to the parties that organised the conference.

These parties are the Jordanian Socialist Arab Baath, the Progressive Arab Baath, the Islamic Action Front, the Arab Action Front, the Jordanian Arab Constitutional Front, the Unionist Democratic, JPDP, the Jordan Communist and Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity parties. These parties formed the anti-normalisation coalition shortly after the signing of the treaty Oct. 26, 1994.

Mr. Nahhas said the Jorda-

nian people "are in a permanent status of confrontation with the enemy in every Jordanian city, tourist site, street, cafe and shop."

He praised residents of the northern city of Irbid for refusing to host the Israeli ambassador, saying people should learn from such an experience. He said Jordanians should feel proud of what happened in Irbid, adding: "After that, who can declare our defeat and say that the opposition is only a minority?"

"You are the majority and your organised action is the only guarantee to enhance the conviction of our people that this treaty has no chance to survive, that it will eventually fall... so let us struggle this treaty till it lies as a rotten carcass," Mr. Nahhas concluded, echoing the address of the conference's preparatory committee.

The committee called for rejecting all "surrender treaties" and all their results and called for coordinating efforts with opponents of the peace process in the occupied territories as well as Arab and Islamic countries.

The committee said it had set up sub-committees in several governorates despite "obstacles placed by the government" and has held periodic meetings at the level of the secretary's general of the nine opposition parties.

It said it has faced many obstacles until it managed to organise Friday's conference, condemning what it termed as the government's infringement on public freedom and arbitrary measures against the opponents of normalisation, recalling a government decision to ban a May 29 rally by the opposition parties.

On May 18, the government announced that the opposition parties could hold a public rally, but reversed that 11 days later, banning the rally shortly before it was to convene.

The government said the parties had sought to instigate public disorder by calling on Jordanians to resist the treaty in a communiqué issued before the rally was held.

The conference, chaired by IAF Secretary General Isahak Farhan, issued a several-page communiqué in Arabic and English which it called "charter for protecting the homeland and confronting normalisation."

The charter, a copy of which was obtained by the Jordan Times, urged the public to continue to regard "the Zionist movement as a threat to our Arab nation and its Islamic identity, and viewing the Zionist state as an occupying enemy, who has confiscated our Arab land, killed thousands of our martyrs and forced the dispersion of our people, and to take all

of this into consideration in any confrontation against the enemy."

It also called on Jordanians "to resist all intellectual, cultural, political, educational and archaeological measures, exemptions or justifications that call for dealing with the Zionist enemy and forgetting its aggression against our land, people and freedoms, or to try to consecrate the rights of the enemy in our land."

It also called for rejecting any modification to school curricula and boycotting any invitations for seminars, conferences, fellowships or cultural, scientific, economic, or other competitions held by Israel or has Israeli participants.

It also called for boycotting Israeli goods or any kind of economic deals with Israel.

Syria: U.S. can bring peace

(Continued from page 1)

were committed to do everything possible to spur the economic development of the region and "reiterated their call for an end to the Arab boycott as soon as possible."

Another Syrian newspaper said Friday it was in no hurry to reach a deal with Israel.

"Syria is not on a rush to accept solutions which do not guarantee its security and sovereignty, nor the recovery of occupied territories on the Golan Heights and in South Lebanon," the official daily Al Thawra wrote.

"It is not constrained by a time factor and does not fear the expiry of some deadline."

Mr. Clinton said at the Washington signing ceremony that "we will press forward with our efforts until the circle of peace is closed. And the circle must include Syria and Lebanon if peace is to be complete."

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is to re-

turn to the Middle East soon to try to get the Syrian track moving.

Syrian and Lebanese diplomats attended the White House ceremony Thursday in which King Hussein and President Mubarak took part, but Syrian President Hafez Al Assad was conspicuous by his absence.

Al Thawra said: "Syria does not adopt hasty positions and is not looking to impose insurmountable conditions, but it is guided by the logic of peace which demand freedom and withdrawal" by the Israelis from occupied lands.

Al Thawra called on the United States "to double its efforts to win an Israeli agreement to respect the U.N. resolutions and the basics of the peace process."

The U.S. leadership must use "firm diplomacy and adopt decisive positions to get out of this impasse and bring peace and security in the region."